342 353 In most countrymen's houses, especially in poorer regions, the 'west room', that behind the hearth, is the only room except for the kitchen and the loft. In some houses, however, there is another room too. This is usually a bedroom, at the opposite end of the kitchen. This was the case at my host's.

353 But in either case it soon becomes apparent that there is something special about the west room. At Luogh this struck one's eye immediately. At my host's the room was a sort of parlour into which none but distinguished guests were admitted. In it were kept pictures of the dead and emigrated members of the family, all 'fine' pieces of furniture, symbolic brass objects brought in by the bride at marriage; the rubrics used when mass was celebrated in the house, in fact all religious objects, crucifixes, and so forth, except the 'blessed lamp' and a 'holy picture' in the kitchen. Nor were my hosts alone in keeping objects of sentimental and religious value in this special room. Other houses did likewise. The general feeling was that such objects 'belonged' there.

353 776 But these facts had little significance until others began to appear. Here we enter the realm which we ordinarily call 'old custom'. The 'west room' had still another association, of a supernatural cast. This appeared only gradually. The 'west room' was of central importance in fairy lore.

In this all Luogh concurred, though few could

be found to give it expression. The cult of the 353
fairies, these days, is branded as 'superstition'. It 776
is under fire from townsman, school-teacher, and
priest. But even those who could express no views
could be seen to act as if they too were believers.

Where fairy paths were remembered to pass the
house, they went by the west room. Where food
and water was left out at night, it was left there.
No outhouse, shed, or other building could be built
on this side of the house. That would bring bad [777]
luck. Very few could or would tell why; they left it
to a common inference. The building would be 'in
the way'. Nevertheless, reluctant as they might be
to express belief, my hosts none the less practised
it. No house of Luogh's twenty-six had any shed or [342]
outhouse at its western end.

Here were two very definite associations with the west room. What did they mean? The attitudes they represented were respect, and perhaps a little fear; but it was respect that was dominant. What was this respect and why should it show itself in fairy-lore and in household furnishing?

Faced with such a problem the anthropologist's 353
usual recourse is to history. Traditionally the west 773
is the land of the dead. In the ancient sun-cult, in 776
which early man has likened his own progress to
that of the sun's daily and yearly course, the west
is the sacred abode of the dead. Even today, we
speak of dying, half jocularly, as 'going west'. In
ancient Celtic mythology, the heaven at life's end,

353 *Tír na nÓg*, and Avalon, the island of apple trees
773 which the Greeks knew as the Garden of the
776 Hesperides, and which in a Christian rendering
the blessed Saint Brendan may have reached, lies to the west in the setting sun. It is very likely that in this folk practice there survives nearly all that remains of an elaborate early mythology.

Alas for our questioning, no one remembers Avalon in Luogh, *Tír na nÓg* is a dying legend. If you ask the old men about the west, tales of sunken cities and strange sea-creatures greet your ears; ask about the fairies and fairy paths and you get, first, indignant denials of such degrading belief, and then anecdotes, tales, incidents, which illustrate their character and their power for good and evil. Ask about the furniture of this room, and you learn only that it is the right and fitting thing that the objects fill this room and no other. No one can trace the continuity; tradition is felt in the mass rather than in the particular.

We are left then with what we can hear and observe about the present. To question upon anything else is to get nowhere; it merely starts a chain of obscuring generalities more inspired by the question than by what Luogh feels and thinks and does.

But the case is not hopeless. If one casts one's
353 reliance upon observations and questions in the
888 present, new facts appear. The west room figures
in marriage. In the contracts drawn up it is often

beyond the haggard wall, as we have noted. All the 241
many tasks of patching and repair are men's work, 221
they fall to the farmer-father and his sons. The 462
annual round is theirs, as the daily one belongs to
the women.

For the countryman, the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to the Epiphany or 'Little Christmas', is the dead of winter. All farm work is at a standstill. The farmer is free to devote the season to holiday. Outside the weather is unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. For him the year has stopped and is waiting to renew its forces.

With the Epiphany, the succession of bitter wet
days does not end, but holiday does. One's mind
turns to the earnest work of the year to come. The
farmer plans his spring planting. On drier days he
can clean ditches and drains; he can lay in seed and
repair machines. In the evenings, conversation on [521]
visits and at home revolves round the coming
planting and calving, and traditional experience
goes from mouth to mouth. In fact, it is the time
for all new plans, for it is Shrovetide, the season of
match-making and marriage.

St. Bridget's Day, February 1, marks the beginning [805]
of spring. For St. Bridget promised every [776]
second day thereafter would be 'hard'. The return
of the 'hard' days of wind and clear weather herald
the land's drying-off. Through February and
March, gardens must be prepared, potatoes planted,

221 241 462 fields made ready for the return of the cattle to them. Each 'hard' day is more than welcome, for then work in the fields can go on. By St. Patrick's day, they say in Clare, the potatoes should all be 'down'; after that there still remains much to do, [776] though the worst is over. St. Patrick promised that after his day *every* day would 'come hard'.

Through the rest of the spring, work is at its most intense. Potatoes must be 'stirred' and 'landed'; other root crops 'put down'. March and April see the birth of calves and the beginning of the season of greater milk yields and intensified butter-making. Before that in February and March [443] the 'great spring fairs' take place, and the year's buying and selling of cattle must be done.

Then, gradually, with the return of warm weather and the drying-off of the land, Irish summer begins. May is often the first summer month. Soon the bogs are dry enough for cutting the year's supply of turf and for stacking it to dry under the summer warmth at the bog's edge.

Once the turf is cut and stacked, the first fruits of the farmer's labour begin to appear. The first crop is cabbage, which was planted at odd times very early. It is practically the only green of the [261] diet and old people remember June or July *an chabáiste*, 'the hungry month', when a delayed potato crop might condemn them to a month or more of semi-starvation upon cabbage. Today new varieties of potatoes mature as early as June. But

538 historical question involved. But even then, we are left with a very broad field of inquiry. All the acts and rituals associated with belief in supernatural powers not directly recognized and regulated by the official doctrine of the Church remain for us to examine.

776 538 The chief of these powers is usually called the 'fairies'. The country-people have many other names for them which they prefer. But, most often, they feel no need of distinguishing them by particular names. They call them simply 'them'. In the pronoun they summarize both their nameless power and their immanence. No greater specification is necessary where such powers crowd so closely in upon one's life. The acts and rituals which spring out of this belief are similarly broad in scope. They range from minor doings and turns of speech of daily life to the most hidden practices of rare and deadly black magic.

Perhaps the native name gives the best definition. The whole fairy-cult is under attack these days. The forces of Church and school are pitted against it. It is nothing more than 'pisherogues', the countryman will tell you. The word is usually translated as 'superstition', but the English word contains too great a bias for us to use it. The 'pisherogues' are much more than ignorant superstitions. In the light of an acquaintance with the practices of the world's peoples, they are easily understandable in much broader terms. They form

a symbolic order overlying the values of social life 776
and clothing them in emotional terms in much the 538
same way as do unofficial dogmas and unofficial, non-logical cosmologies among all peoples, not excepting those of our own urban civilization of today. In that, they respond to recognizable sociological and psychological necessities. In its own way, Yankee New England is as fertile of such non-logical beliefs as is rural Ireland. Rural Ireland is different only in that she has preserved an older and more ancient terminology in which to build her particular symbolism. She has her own genius in the matter which expresses the age-long continuities of her culture.

I think you will perhaps understand me better if I go on to sketch out the symbolism which the 'pisherogues' contain.

First, one must notice that the Irish countryman 781
is a very devout man. His life is ordered in his 789
adherence to his religion. Much of his habit of 776
mind and his view of the world responds to his Faith. He is a devout and practising Catholic. But he is also devout in another direction too, very often. Just as there is room in his mind and heart for patriotic fervour along with religious zeal, so is there room for fairy belief. Sometimes, of course, these devotions may conflict; but ordinarily they need not. They can intermesh and support one another.

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Thus in his daily life, one finds the countryman 776

789 carrying out many acts which are related both to
● 776 his Church and his fairy belief. His allegiance to the first is, of course, definitely greater, but he has room for both. One finds him, for instance, 'blessing' himself on setting out for the day's work, or on beginning a trip or a new undertaking such as the potato-planting, with two purposes in mind. If you ask him, you learn, first, that he dedicates his day or his enterprise to God. He throws himself upon divine protection. Secondly, he seeks that protection to a definite end. He hopes to ward off thus the forces of evil and ill-luck. He hopes to assure himself the enterprise will prosper. He guards himself against molestation from 'the good people'.

That does not mean he is motivated by fear even when 'the good people' are concerned. His devotion springs from deeper and wider emotional sources than mere fear. Rather he makes his peace with the fairies; he pays them their due. His religion is *the* Faith to him, and his acts are primarily, first and foremost, acts of religious devotion. But the popular mind is not distressed very much with logical inconsistencies, and somewhere in the act, very secondarily, of course, may lurk the other lesser faith he holds.

776 Thus, in one aspect, the 'pisherogues' occupy, like nearly all folklore, the border-line between the natural, profane, mundane world and that of the supernatural, the sacred, and the religious. It is

along this border-line that we must trace the countryman. 776

I say fear is not his chief motive. For the good people are not entirely fearsome. I have often heard countrymen, steeped in the old lore, say, "They'll leave you alone if you don't be in their way". One makes a great mistake to think of any holder of popular belief as a person ridden with superstitious fear, unable to make his way through ordinary life. As one countryman told another collector, Lady Gregory, in the days before the war: "If we knew how to be neighbourly with them, they would be neighbourly and friendly with us".

It is a question, then, of giving 'them' their due. 776
Where older custom survives, certain precautions 626
must be taken. You are probably all familiar with many of them. Food and water must be left for them at night. Dirty water must not be thrown out at night. For the night is a 'lonely time'; 'you wouldn't like to be out in it'. The fairies are abroad. Were the water thrown out, there is danger that it might dirty them as they pass along a fairy-path or make a nocturnal visit. Then they will be angry, and disaster will follow. A hen, a pig, a cow, even a child may sicken and die.

But this anger of theirs, you see, results from direct affront. And that affront lies, really, in improper conduct. In the case of dirty water, it lies directly in improper conduct of the household.

● 776
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Throwing out dirty water is slovenly and bad management. The community condemns it as much as do the fairies who might be wetted.

Consequently, one can begin to see the existence of a projection of values into the world of belief. Dangerous as 'they' are, they bring good luck and prosperity as well, if they receive their proper due. Their favour follows proper conduct of the household and good household management in daily life. Thus one finds such statements possible as the following, in which an old fellow of North Clare, an authority on such matters, speaks of 'their' nocturnal visits:

"They very often put up at a house in the night. They would come to certain houses, and if they liked the house and it was good and clean and everything swept for them, they would come often to the same house, and that house would be prosperous. If it was dirty and they found no comfort in it they would not stop. They'd go to strong houses like the Careys' [he named a comfortable, neat family of small farmers in the neighbourhood]. You often see a little old woman going along the road and stopping in asking for a bite to eat, and you might give it to her, and she looking to see was it a good house for them to stop in it."

Thus many tales told of the good people point a moral. In this light such a common tale as that of the herdsman's house is readily understandable. The herdsman, as a landless man, is regarded by

the small farmers as being a 'cut' below them- 776
selves; consequently, his untidiness is a byword 626
among them. One version of the story goes, in
synopsis, as follows:

"Many families moved into a herdsman's place, but they were all chased out of it. Finally, one family moved in, cleaned up the house, and a 'paving path' round it. A little old woman visits the wife, borrows a cooking-pot, and is similarly well treated. In gratitude she explains that the woman of the house and her husband will always prosper and never be molested, because they alone of all the families had cleaned up the place where 'they' walk."

In this way the values of daily life are projected [181]
into and reinforced by the supernatural world. The 626
same state of affairs holds good even in the con- 576
vention of social intercourse. The vocabulary of the 152
countryman is full of homely pieties. On entering a house the proper greeting is "God bless all here". On coming upon another at work, one says, "God bless the work". Similarly, "God spare you the health" is 'put on' anyone who 'coors' with you. Any praise of person, child, or animal is accompanied with a "God bless it"; any mention of unpleasantness or danger is followed with some such homily as "God bless the mark", and so on. If one omits such pieties, one is sure to rouse resentment in the listeners. For one must remember that emotion supports these conventions. But the

152 resentment springs from other causes, too. These
576 formulae are known to the folklorist as 'protective
626 formulae'. He means by that that they have reference to the lesser faith as well as to the greater that the countryman holds.

If you ask the countryman why he uses such
751 terms, he will give you several answers. First, "You
152 have right to do it, because you owe it to God",
576 and then, second, "It will bring good luck, it will
626 keep 'them' away". For the countryman, both answers are true. The phrases are both acts of pious invocation and protective devices warding off evil. Their omission is really dangerous. It puts the person or thing so neglected in jeopardy; the negligent speaker is open to suspicion of an evil intent. Thus there are many stories which attribute disease, disaster and death to such omissions. In this way again, persons and things of value to the countryman are brought into the scope of his beliefs and attitudes. The forces which affect them are brought into a shape in which he can understand them and in which he can cope with them.

Perhaps the most interesting part of this process
● 776 is to be found in the way in which the goods by which the countryman lives are brought into his belief. The good people affect the household and all its goods. They 'take' those things which one values, round which one's interest and sentiments, as a member of the farm-working family, are centred. One Galway woman phrased this idea to

Lady Gregory: "They have cows, and sheep, and 776
chickens out in the raths just the way we have them with us. For it is they that take them when the bad luck is on us and then whatever we do won't stop them." The 'other people', as they are also called, are not very different in this regard from ordinary mortals; they surround themselves with much the same materials of life.

So, then, when ill-luck descends upon him, the 234
countryman knows something at least of its nature, 776
enough to allow him to cope with it. Take the 789
example of butter. Butter is an important staple of farm diet; it is of great interest to all the family group. Yet the making of butter, especially with a hand-churn, is a notoriously tricky process. Should it fail to come in the churning, the matter is one of grave concern. One woman of North Clare put the matter very clearly when she said: "And queer things do happen to butter, and it's a fact it often wouldn't come and you don't know why. You'd be trying every way you could and still you'd be without it but for what your friends would give you."

But in that event, the countryman is not left helpless. His belief provides him with a sure knowledge of what the trouble is, and of what may be done about it. The fairies have 'taken' the butter and must be induced to bring it back. Many of the tales he has heard year after year attest to this taking. For instance, here is the synopsis of a story

234 told by a Clare farmer of friends of his, whose
● 776 789 house he named:

"Two men return from a fair to the house of one
234 of them to have breakfast. There the woman was
776 churning, but no butter would come. The first of
789 the men suggested maybe they [the men] were
539 holding it up, and they left the house, but with no result, for when they returned there was still no butter. Upon finding out that an old woman, a stranger, had borrowed a bit of milk the day before, the first man closed the doors, took a ploughshare and held it in the turf fire. Soon there came a knock at the door, and after the third knock the woman of the house went to it. Then an old woman's hand passed a jug of milk through the crack of the door and a voice said: 'put this back in the churn'. She did so, and immediately all the milk turned to good butter."

But the farmer knows, too, that the fairies do not
776 always work alone. There is often a human agency
754 involved along with theirs. Here one enters the really dangerous 'pisherogues', the practices of wicked magic. A human being may perform a rite or omit a precaution in such a way as to bring about a visitation of ill-luck and disaster. He may transfer disease and sickness from his own farm to the next, he may steal the butter of another's churn, he may destroy, steal, maim and kill by inducing the super-
776 natural powers to commit the havoc.

789 But sometimes the human being who brings

about such a visitation upon another does so un- 776
intentionally, innocent of evil intent. A person can 789
be either lucky or unlucky; he may tap a fairy [777]
power without meaning to. Thus one humorous story, a favourite yarn of the fairy-lore, found widely over Ireland, relates the misadventures of one rash fellow:

"A man that was usually drunk was going by a 789
fort one night and he heard 'them' talking in it, and 776
saying, 'I'll take half of it and let you have the 539
other.' 'I'll have all of it', shouted my boy-o, never thinking. When he got home, his wife was making butter, but she couldn't get any to come. But now she tried again, and it came in and filled the churn twice over and ran over the floor. There was a big farmer near by, and it was all his butter she was getting. She was an honest woman and knew the butter wasn't hers and she wanted to make it known she hadn't anything to do with it, so she told the priest about it."

Other things than butter are so taken, of course. 776
Cattle figure prominently in folk belief. Cattle, as 789
we know, are very important to the countryman. 233
The time of calving is a crucial event in farm-family life. Consequently, precautions must be taken; danger is abroad, and rites must be performed. If cattle fall sick, other rites drive off the threatening good people and restore the cow to health. Fairy-tales are full of the taking of cattle by the people of the raths.

755 Thus, cures of cattle and human beings, as well,
● 776 bring in the fairy-lore. The good people may take
[233] anything from hens to men and women. When
they mysteriously sap the strength of a man or
woman, leaving him or her sick or weak and listless,
he or she is little recognizable as the strong helper
and friend of former years. The vitality has gone
out of him or her. The country-people can believe
that 'they' have spirited away the real person and
left in his place "some spent old man that they
had with them for a long time". The real person is
'away'. Cures, both religious and responding to the
fairy-cult, must bring him back. That does not
[753] mean that they do not recognize what we might
call natural sickness or disease; they do, only too
well, from bitter experience. It means only that
they have an explanation for it that infuses it with
the associations they have about their belief.

776 For the belief in changelings, about which you
all have heard a great deal, has its root in the
fairies' 'taking'. In fact, it is sometimes said, as
it was to Lady Gregory, that "all persons who die
[761] are taken, except the old people". Only for them is
death the natural course of events; all others have
fallen prematurely into the power of the supernatural forces.

776 Thus we can see that the countryman's fairy
183 belief is not entirely a catalogue of wonders, by
82 any means. Nearly all the disturbances of his interests and sentiments can be brought into the scope

of an emotionally charged explanatory scheme. 776
The trouble overtaking them becomes interpret- 183
able for him; he knows what has happened and is 82
in some measure ready to take the necessary steps. The fate of his goods and his fellows affects him vitally, it upsets the attachments he feels. But belief is common property; it is given to him and held for him by that community of his fellows of which he is a part. It is a socially held ideology to which he gives credence and in which he is dependent upon his fellows for ways and means, for corroboration, for solace.

But this ideology is much more than a mere in- 776
terpretative device. Certain anthropologists have 183
tried to see in magic and magic belief a groping, primitive science; but the concept has failed them if pressed very far. For the fairy faith enforces definite behaviour upon the countryman; it lays down rites and practices which he must perform. If he is to recover his goods that have been taken, restore his threatened animals, friends or children, he must follow a definite course. That course is laid down for him again by his community of belief and habit.

If we examine the course he must adopt to com- 776
bat ill-luck and disaster, we see a new incorporation 789
into belief of the things he values. In cures, nostrums, and other means of combating evil, the goods upon which he and his fellows are dependent and to which they are attached are once more

776 brought into the scope of belief. They become
789 repositories of 'power'. They come to carry in their
own substance the same supernatural efficacy for
good or evil which belongs to the good people.

754 So, when the good people strike, the countryman
776 who still follows the old folklore is not unprepared.
789 If butter fails to come, for instance, he can take a
hearth-coal and sear the bottom of the churn. He can apply iron in a variety of forms; for "there is great power in iron". He can use a hazel-stick, of the kind used in driving cattle, to cure cattle, or to give relief from sickness. He can ward off the disease that has struck his farm or household by transferring the dead thing to another's land, thus forcing the evil 'penalty' to follow it. Or, even more simply, he can merely transfer an egg, a potato, the hearth ashes, of his own threatened household to another's land or garden, and the danger goes with them. These practices drive off the 'good people'.

Similarly, when any of the household goods fall into another's possession, there is danger ahead for the household whose integrity is so broken. If butter fails, borrowed hearth-coals, or tools, or milk may hold the cause. One has merely to find the missing bit of goods, restore it to its rightful place, and thus restore the breach through which the good people have made their dangerous entrance into the life of one's family group and its possessions.

Naturally, then, transfer of this sort is dangerous

to the persons to whose land the object is trans- 776
ferred. Consequently, the fearsome 'pisherogues' 789
of black magic often take this form. An egg, a 754
potato, a wand of hazel or thorn mysteriously found in one's own garden is evidence of witchcraft, and danger for one's land and stock and family. That the reason ascribed to the outbreak of ill-luck may be arrived at after the fact, makes it none the less compelling. Belief is a social habit which events confirm.

I shall give you two examples, one of them about a dead thing, and another where simple, homely household objects come to have supernatural power. The first is the account a shopkeeper in a country town gave of a countryman-customer of his. "A countryman came into the shop one day and I asked him how things were going. Bad, said he, he was after losing three cows. I asked how was that, and Martin said it was the 'pisherogues'. He was working down in the bog and found the carcass of a cow there. What did you do with it? I asked him. He left it there, said himself. He was not going to move it for fear of the 'pisherogues'. Didn't they carry it there to put the curse on him, and wasn't it the next week his own cows sickened and died? . . . Then I was asking him, why didn't you get a vet, man? Sure, he said, why should I throw good money after a vet, and I knowing very well what happened to them?"

The second example is an account of disaster and

776 its happy termination from a farmer who told the
789 story in a traditional vein, but whose own record of
754 actuality it is. I might say that the role of the curate
[793] in the episode was probably very different from
that which the countryman imagined it to be.

"A fellow he knows was hilling potatoes and he got three young fellows to help him. Each of them found an egg in the garden, one a hen's egg, the second a goose egg, the third a turkey's egg. [He told this with great dramatic effect.] Well, the man hadn't any poultry on his farm at all.

"The boys went home and told their mothers, and the women told other women about it till it got all round the parish. The curate heard of it and one day he went over to the farmer and
[793] stopped in. They talked about all sorts of other things, and finally the curate said, I am sorry for you. Why? said himself. Because you are going to have bad luck. And he told him about the eggs.

"Well, the farmer had terrible hardships. His stock died on him, he'd go out in the morning and find his ewes dead on their backs with their legs in the air and lambs dropped dead out of their wombs. He had five cows in calf and after that spring he had only one cow left. A pig died on him, and his sister took sick, like to die herself she was. [After a
[793] time] the curate came . . . and he held masses in the farmer's house.

"He's doing well again now and has a fine lot of stock. That was about four years ago."

Here then one can see a new kind of incorporation of the values of the countryman's life into belief. The goods round which his interests are centred come to be either beneficial or dangerous to the group to which he belongs, depending upon their connection with it in the critical situations which threaten disease and disaster. Ordinarily, there is nothing supernatural or dangerous about an egg or a hazel-stick, to the countryman. But in these special situations, in which tradition comes to his rescue, they take on a wholly different character. Thus we have the seemingly paradoxical case that the things of greatest 'power' are not by any means always the wondrous, unusual, and fearsome things, but the homely articles of use and familiar associations. Iron cures, but iron is not mysterious. An egg becomes a sign of witchcraft; a pinch of salt protects one against evil; but neither are fearsome things in themselves. Yet in critical circumstances they have the power to heal, to hurt, to cure, to destroy. 776 ● 789 754 183

For what the countryman's belief is doing for him is something belief always seems destined to do, wherever it is found. Tradition is bearing upon him to keep alive and organize the regard his group must feel for the codes of conduct and the objects of use by which it lives. Belief focuses his attention and his emotions upon them. It gives sanctity to his conventions, his needs, and his goods. It infuses them with emotional associations far beyond 183

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

191 *anschauung*, in which all experience has a place in
183 the logic of emotional associations. Thus one old
fellow summed up a discussion of the sea creatures
181 which still haunt the western coasts of Ireland:
183 "Everything that does be on the land is in the sea,
821 too, if we could see them". This world-view incorporates the world into the life the countryman follows and knows. To the same old fellow, winds along the Clare and Galway border that separates Munster and Connaught provinces could appear as the battles of fairy hosts, for do not men today still remember human battles and still taunt the men of the other province in joke and banter? The rustle of a breeze and the flitting of bats in a ruin where men lived and died is not mere noise; it is still part of human life. One old fellow described to me the experience of 'them' that he got at close quarters, when he lived near the ruin of Ballyvaughan workhouse:

"They were so plentiful there that everybody living round it and myself got so used to them that we wouldn't mind them at all. The place is full of them and everywhere you go there is a door and long windows in the cowl, and you hear them going in and out. There was a great lot of people died in it long ago in the bad times. They are in every room and you hear them on all sides of you. I got so
181 used to it, I never minded them at all, but I heard
183 them every day."

823 The great cliffs of Moher on the Clare coast are
776

a landmark notable enough for many a legend, but 823 183
the tales of it that best survive are those that relate 181
it to the life of the present and express in the fairy- 776
belief its danger to human life and property. "There's somebody lost," I was told, "off every bit of the cliffs. In the old days the men used to go down often [for wood and salvage]. They used to [481]
go down on their own ropes. . . . There was a fellow over in Liscannor who would go down at any time of day or night. He used to go down for lost sheep or lambs. One day a child fell off Aillenasearrach and he went down for the body . . . but when he came up he said he'd never go down again because every rock down below was covered with people sitting on it. People out of the sea they were. . . . Two little girls were lost looking for flowers the fairies put there to grow. The flowers aren't there at all, but are put there just to draw people over the cliffs."

Thus belief and rite in folklore conspire to a 181
common end. They provide the countryman with 183
a world-view in which his regard for things and 776
scenes and events is charged with the emotional forces necessary in his social life.

But as we have seen again and again throughout our whole discussion, the sentiments he holds are organized first and foremost round his fellows: the members of his family, household, kindred, and the community. It is toward them that his habit is fashioned and in his relation to them that his social

181 order takes its form. Consequently, we should ex-
183 pect fairy-belief and rite to symbolize the regard he
776 has for his fellows even more strongly than that he
holds to the non-human associations of his life.

The expectation is amply borne out. Fairy-belief is first and foremost a symbolism of social life. In the logic of emotional identifications, it organizes, directs, and controls the feelings of human beings for their fellows.

Thus fairy power and dangerous influence are strongest at times when the interest of human beings in their fellows is strongest. With every change overtaking the individual in his course through life among his fellows, the supernatural world steps in. At such times as birth, growing-up, marriage, becoming a parent, growing old and dying, belief catches the countryman in a web of precautions and reminders which signalize force-fully the importance of the change. For example,
181 the birth of a child is not just another event in
183 nature. It is a change of vital importance to the
851 family group, and indirectly to the community.
776 It is cause for rejoicing and congratulation, but it
is cause, too, for resolve and determination in the face of new duties. It brings a new orientation in the lives of those who welcome the newcomer. Their relations to one another undergo development; they must henceforth learn new ways which include the newcomer and which prepare a place for him in the life of his fellows.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Consequently, rural ceremony signalizes the 181
event. Custom brings together those concerned, 183
for rejoicing, for recognition of the place of the 851
newcomer in the group, for an expression of the 776
sentiments that unite them all. The rural 'christening' is no mere idle jollification; it is a secular baptism, as important for social life as is the Sacrament of Baptism for religion. Naturally, then, fairy-belief is represented very strongly. It surrounds the crucial event of birth and its consequences with a hundred necessities of action which carry with them powerful emotional dispositions. Fear, awe, wonder, religious feeling, and plain caution can all be pressed into service to mould the countryman into an acceptance of the new state of affairs; the logic of belief fits these emotions into the countryman's world-view.

The good people are particularly active at such 181
times as this. Every association with birth is infused 183
with power and danger. Even the midwife who 844
attends becomes a magic figure; the aura that sur- 776
rounds the dangerous and crucial event invests her entire personality. She can command the fairies, disperse their attacks, travel through the air, transfer labour pains at will to a truculent or negligent husband. She is in communication with the fairy powers; in tale and story she often finds her ministrations commandeered by them and her person wafted off into the forts and raths to attend a fairy-woman there. She herself may deny all this; but it

181 is true, none the less, in belief. Like all else at birth,
183 she is linked to the good people, and in the linkage
● 776 an explanation is given for the identity of the
844 emotional associations which surround both her
and them.

181 Similarly, all other crucial changes in social life,
183 as well as those of the religious life, come to fit into
776 the same scheme for many of the country-people
852 who still follow the old tradition. The good people
figure in them all.

Thus, First Communion and Confirmation—events of first magnitude in the life of the devout countryman—bring changes in emotional well-being; they bestow a real, if mysterious and holy, strength. This, of course, is first of all a part of religious experience. But the events are also accompanied, in the countryside, by changes in one's relations to one's fellows, in traditional social organization. The child is separated first from others of opposite sex after First Communion; he is introduced to full farm work and, very often, leaves school after Confirmation. His fellows in family and community must henceforward have a new regard for him and treat him differently. So, in these changes, the good people have their role, too. Precautions against their influence reinforce one's dependence upon a symbolic order which incorporates these changes. They make definite and unforgettable the magnitude of the change and the new dispositions which must be learned. Thus,

Again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social habit.

again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social 000
habit.

If we leave aside marriage, where folk-custom 183
and folk-belief are no less important toward the 181
same ends, we can devote our attention to the 761
greatest change of all. Death brings the greatest disturbance in social habit. It shakes emotional equilibrium to its foundation. Yet society must allow for death; it must provide an orderly transition and continuance.

The devout Irishman, of course, finds his greatest consolation in his Catholic Faith. He knows the fate of his loved ones. His religion teaches him how to communicate with them, in the Communion of Saints, through prayer. Faith heals his hurt and it gives him a way of filling the void death creates.

Yet, as I have said, he has room in his heart and 181
mind for the fairy-belief too. Social life must take 183
account of death no less than religion. When death 761
removes one of the human beings to whom he is 776
related as brother, friend or fellow, it leaves behind the traces of sentiment and habit that were once bonds of relationship and association. These must be reformed, and in the reformation a new synthesis between the dead member of the group and the living be found. The countryman resembles us all in this respect; he cannot forget 'the old familiar faces'. He must have an explanation in the world-view of folklore and folk-custom for

181 the effect they still exert upon him after they are
183 gone.

761 So the dead join 'them'. On the border-line
● 776 between the mundane world and the mysteries of
[775] Faith, they find a place in the ranks of the good people, as the misnamed fairies are often called. They are the denizens of rath and fort and hill and cave. There is nothing fundamentally incompatible between this and religious belief, however folklore may escape the control of dogma and sometimes, in its humbler vein, run counter to it. The dead do affect the living, in memory and in tradition. Death is the 'other world' to which we are all advancing. As one fellow could say in a burst of poetic imagery growing out of folk-belief: "The old people in the west room are going down with the sun".

Why not indeed, when we remember that the good people are not always by any means evil and forbidding? They exert their power for both good and evil. They bring reward as well as punishment. The countryman has friends among them as he has friends among men in this world. An Aran woman put the belief for Lady Gregory in words which transport earthly loyalties to the other world. "There's often fighting heard about the house when one is sick. That is what we call the fighting of
181 friends, for we believe it is the friends and enemies
183
776 of the sick person fighting for him."

775 Indeed, the same aids that make up habit and

give base to sentiment in mundane affairs can be 181
projected into the after-world. One must act toward 183
'them' in death as one acts toward the living; 775
one must do the 'friendly' thing. Thus they can tell 776
a story in Luogh of a man there who they say "was walking along the road and he saw the ghost of his brother. He didn't say anything to it and it walked home with him all in silence. They sat at the fire for a long time, the [living] man waiting for the other to go, so he could go to bed. Finally, the dead man said: 'You have put me to great trouble tonight by not saluting me when we met. I must go now and now I won't be able to defend you in the council in the rath.' And it was true for him, too: the cow that was ailing with the man was taken the next week."

Thus, you see, one can envision 'them' both in 181
mystic terms and in terms sometimes very bald and 183
intimate indeed. The younger people in Luogh still 753
follow the old belief, though they leave its expression 776
to their elders. Yet they could explain the tumour on an old man's head in words which show how near 'the other people' are and how direct is the aid one's friends among them can give:

"Old Seumas was coming along the road drunk and he met a crowd of them on the road and one of them slapped him. If he'd taken the slap he'd be all right but he took off his coat and dared any one of them to stand down to him. They beat him and

181 gave him a terrible knock over the poll. One of
183 them that was great friends with him saved
753 him."
● 776

181 Nor are 'they' always fearsome, even in their
183 most wondrous apparitions. The dead are too
775 much a part of life in rural Ireland for that. For the old people they are too near; too many friends have crossed the line between this world and the next.

Thus the dead may come to cover nearly every association of life; in the eyes of some of the old people, the other world of wonders where the 'other people' reign spreads all about them. To the initiate in such mysteries there is nothing to fear. Let me give you my record of one conversation of mine with a very old man of North Clare, a man of clear mind and great folk-learning. His answers to my naïve questions will show you how well he felt, accepted and expressed the symbolic order of the countryside:

I asked what a 'cowl' was. "They are the houses where the family has died out of them. People would live in them if they wasn't too bad, falling down and dirty. You often see old people sitting in them." "What people?" I asked. "The people that used to be in it," he replied. "Do you mean ghosts?" He answered me scornfully: "You might see lights in the cowl and you going along the road at night and you pass people you don't know and you can't tell if they are ghosts or not. Of all the

183
people you pass in the town, how would you know 181
what it is they are?" 775

Only the young men, like myself, would be 181
frightened by this uncertainty in rural Ireland. For 183
all but the old people, such mysteries are awesome 888
and compelling. Once again, folk-belief fashions 776 ●
itself for a social end. In belief the believers un- 775
consciously agree upon an emotional organization of human relations; folklore expresses once again the organization of the community upon age and upon the past. The old couple who move in among the fairy influences and the symbols of family tradition and sentiment in the west room, the old people in whom rural kinship is centred and through whom sentiment is directed to the mystic past of ancestral blood lineage, the old men and women round whose influence the local community patterns its local life, need not fear greatly the imagery that symbolizes the very place they occupy. Rather they can come to immerse themselves in it. They grow very learned in this lore. They are the ones who sometimes come to manipulate it. They are themselves, sometimes, half fairy. 'Wise men' and 'wise women' are always old. It is no accident that the commonest representation of the fairy power is an old man or woman. They are the initiates in the mysteries of the fairy faith.

In this fact one can see the final synthesis between social habit and belief. Rural kinship organizes men and women in a common orientation

181 backward and upward toward the dead and the
183 ancestral. The community bestows ever greater
888 status and influence as one progresses further and
●776 further toward the age-grade of the old, in whom
775 tradition and precedent are preserved and expressed. In the sphere of credence and emotion the fairy faith acts to the same end and is so designed. The design, in this instance as in all the others, is not conscious; no one has planned it. It is a design drawn from the social order and acting back upon it. Its imagery is traditional, but its efficacy is of the present. And for that reason it lives.

Thus, in the identification between the old, the dead and the influences which affect the goods, the conducts and the values of the countryman's life, the symbolic order is completed. Folk-belief, in the ancient fairy-cult, with its age-old imagery, makes a complete emotional synthesis, overlying and reacting back upon the sentiment and habit out of which it springs again and again with each generation that learns the old way of life. Consequently, each new generation works a change upon it; elements of the synthesis undergo constant re-embellishment and shift of emphasis. Both old and young are controlled by it, but each in a different way. Today the young are sceptical and a little rebellious; they repudiate much of the
[178] older imagery. All that the Church condemns in
the 'pisherogues', they also condemn. Today folk-belief is undergoing marked change like all else in this world, like all else in Ireland.

178
belief is undergoing marked change like all else 181
in this world, like all else in Ireland. 183

But that does not mean the death-knell of folk- 775
lore, as some students of folklore seem to think. 776
Far from that, it means only that a symbolic order like any growth in human life must change and grow onward. New forms and new imagery will grow up to clothe in emotional terms the necessary reformations of habit and sentiment in social life, and new syntheses will fashion new belief, changing the old or supplanting it inch by inch.

One can see this process at work in rural Ireland 178
today. Those who repudiate the fairies repudiate 183
only the outmoded symbols, the outworn images. They do not deny the necessity of a symbolic order in their own lives. The student of man is coming to think today that they could not do so, because no people can. There must always be some socially efficacious organization of the sentiments of social life in the logic of belief and imagery. Belief provides first of all a conception of life; then, and then only, does it carry on to become a conception of the world. But life among men includes emotional attitudes at once very necessary and very satisfying; one can starve the spirit only so far. And for that reason the logic of a social order is not that of science and prose, it is that of emotion. Consequently, those of the countryside who repudiate the older symbols merely demand that their emphasis be shifted. They do not cry out for bald

In the treatment of death, one can see the social 764
system of rural Ireland in the full perspective of its 183
deep-rooted strength. In the flashes of poetic genius 602
which seem so prone to trip from an Irish tongue, 776
death acquires a deeper and more poignant meaning than many another racial tongue could give it. And so it is in the mundane, prosaic world of social life. The most important secular ceremony of rural life is the wake and funeral. In the crowds that come to the wake-house to pay their respects to the dead and condole with the living; in the long lines of marching figures, traps, jaunting cars and motor-cars that make a slow procession over the open roads from wake-house to church and from church to graveside, the observer glimpses an epitome of rural life in which all its values are mingled.

Kinship bonds are at their strongest. Traditional custom enforces upon the kindred important roles in laying out the dead, in carrying the coffin, in digging the grave, in keening him, in reciting funeral laments that are the last survivals of bardic elegies, in preparing entertainment for all comers, in which the dead man's survivors proudly affirm their place and his in the life of the community.

In all this the fairy-lore takes part. The banshee's cry is merely the funeral keen issued from a fairy voice. It signalizes death in the symbolic world just as the keen of the living signalizes living personal loss. It is the lament over common loss in a common cause, for relatives of the dead must greet each other with the keen at the wake-house.

000 other with the keen at the wake-house.

The goods of household and farm suffer incor-
764 poration into emotional symbolism once more;
183 precautions must be taken to protect them and
181 prevent their going beyond with the lost one. Time
776 and place of death are clothed with a hundred
supernatural associations.

The reciprocities which make up friendship and give status in the community get full play. Every man, in death, can command a multitude. To stay away, to make no recognition of the day, is to give deadly affront. Every 'right Irishman' turns and walks, if only a few steps, along with the procession. In towns, all the blinds upon the street are drawn and shop-fronts are boarded, in recognition. In the Gaelic tongue, indeed, one and the same word does service for both funeral and multitude. And in the fairy-lore "there is never a funeral but the other people are at it, too, walking along behind". Many a countryman, steeped in the old lore, sees in a whirlwind or puff of mist a *socraid sidhe* or fairy-funeral.

He knows thereby that somewhere the chief expression of traditional social life is calling the countrymen together through a whole countryside for a re-enactment, both solemn and gay, of their sentiments about their fellows and about their view of life and death and destiny.

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343 234 Behind the cows there runs a slab-lined drain or groop, which carries the refuse through the "groop hole" in the wall to the midden. Hanging from the rannel-tree you may perchance see a charm in the shape of a perforated flint ● [776] pebble, while over the door, decaying Brigid's Crosses dating [751] back for several successive years show that the cattle are under the special protection of the Irish saint. In the byre gable it is not uncommon to see a dove-cote, at any rate along [235] the east coast where English influence has been strong since Norman times. Pigeons are fond of heat and thrive near farm animals. In Lecale, Co. Down, I have seen nests made of straw rope hung above the horses in the stable.

343 251 The barn is not infrequently built above the byre. When the dwelling house alongside remains, in the Irish tradition, single-storied, the effect of the towering barn is rather incongruous. This arrangement makes it simple to feed the animals, provides a springy wooden floor for thrashing, and also gives a better draught for the purpose. Moreover, the raised position helps to make the corn secure from damp and rats. The barn has opposite doors and half doors to regulate the through draught and to keep out stray animals while work goes on inside. Access to the barn is obtained by external stone steps or a sloping ramp, under which the stone dog kennel is often built in. Some of the activities and appurtenances of the barn are described in Chapter 14.

343 Little need be said about the stable, since small farms have as a rule only one mare. In the old-time single-roomed kitchen-byres, the mare had her stall alongside the cows, and you will sometimes see the keeping-hole above the back door where the brush and curry comb were stored. The stable, like the byre, may be attached to the house or may be separate, but for convenience and economy it tends to be built as part of a range of buildings. In decayed rundale clusters now occupied by only one or two holders there were, ready to hand, many old dwelling houses which could be put to different uses as "offices."

Before we turn to the housing of other livestock, mention should be made of the turf-house, for which many different

CHAPTER XVII

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS: THE COUNTRY TOWN.

Although the Celtic year began with All Hallows Day 221
(November 1st), for our purpose we may regard it as starting 796
on February 1st, or St. Bridget's Day. This was the first day 805
of Spring, and of field work, for the Saint promised that every [821]
second day thereafter would be hard and dry. The circle of [996]
the year ran its course through the seasons, punctuated by certain fixed festivals and by the uncertain advent of births, marriages, illness and death. It is with the fixed festivals that we are concerned in this chapter. The four seasons have their opening days on the first of February, May, August and November, and the celebration of these days and the preceding Eves is a pagan survival breaking through the Christian calendar. The festivals of February and of November have been taken under the special protection of the Church through their association with St. Bridget and All Saints, but many traces of the "elder faiths" of nature worship live on, sanctified by tradition if not always by the Church.

On St. Bridget's Eve (January 31st) it is customary for 221
country children to pull rushes—they must not be cut with a 796
knife—and take them home to be made into crosses by the 788
family gathered round the fire. A fixed ritual, varying from 285
one district to another, determines the procedure, and it traditionally included the St. Bridget's supper of pancakes or sowens taken from a plate laid on top of a rush cross. The

788 offending person. Similar stones have been used to work
823 beneficent magic in the case of expectant mothers. Here the
778 symbolism may be that of the child in the womb, but there
are other cases where it is obviously phallic. Sympathetic
magic would appear to be the explanation of another custom,
that of carrying away in a cloth and making into various
concoctions, some of which were drunk, the earth from the
[755] grave of a holy man. The drink was regarded as a cure for
human sins or for disease in cattle.

829 The megaliths themselves are known to have been held in
● 776 veneration as givers of fertility and curative agents. The
same virtues attach to certain solitary stones, for instance
[778] some holy wells have "healing stones" which are used to
touch the affected parts of the body. Standing stones with
a perforation ("holed-stones") are said to have been used in
sealing marriage contracts. Megaliths are also considered the
haunts of fairies, which, some students affirm, are to be
regarded as ancestral spirits inhabiting the burial places and
awaiting an opportunity to be born again. Alternatively it
is thought that belief in fairies is a folk memory of ancient
peoples of small stature. It is hardly necessary to say that
belief in fairies is firmly held in many parts of the country:
I have seen quite recently boys dressed in girls' clothes as a
protection against fairy theft, for the "wee people" are
liable to exchange their "changelings" for healthy boys—a
[165] belief which is perhaps an attempt to explain the high
mortality of male as compared with female children.

764 It has more than once been my experience to be refused
[777] permission to excavate megalithic monuments from the
owner's belief that bad luck would follow. Country people
will not touch the trees that grow on ancient burial sites, for
instance they will not even use fallen branches as fuel. This
reluctance to interfere with the abodes of the dead provides a
charitable explanation of the neglect from which many
Christian burial grounds suffer. Incidentally it is worth
[824] remarking that archæologists have often shown by their
discoveries that hazel wood and hazel nuts played a consider-

able part in the ceremonies of megalithic burial: we remember 764
the significance attached to hazel nuts in the Hallowe'en games 824
of divination (Chapter 17).

The ancient raths or forths, earthen enclosures around old 776
homesteads, are also favourite haunts of fairies, and many 789
are the tales of mysterious happenings in their neighbourhood 829
at night, and of signs of habitation and sweet music issuing
from them. Protection from fairies is believed to be obtained 778
by possession of a black-hafted knife, while oatmeal or oatcakes are also specifics against their malign influence. From fairies as from witches the supreme hour of peril to mortals is at the eves of Beltane, Midsummer and All Hallows. Cattle afflicted with disease were believed to be "elf-shot"—the belief is not entirely dead—and flint arrowheads were produced as proof of the attack. The cure was to give the affected animal a drink of the water in which the arrow had been placed. Among other archæological relics the polished stone axes of the Neolithic and Bronze ages are known as thunderbolts and are accredited with healing powers, and the small spinning-whorls are termed fairy mill-stones. As Arthur Mitchell writes of Scotland: "It is believed that stone celts assist the birth of children; that they increase the milk of cows; that they cure the diseases of the eye; that they protect the houses in which they are kept from lightning; and that they have many other such marvellous virtues. It is believed that, as they have a sort of supernatural origin, they may reasonably be supposed to have supernatural powers."

When food is taken out of doors it is a common belief that 776
some must be left behind for the fairies, otherwise the dreaded 789
"hungry grass" will grow; and the countryman will often
spill a portion of his drink as a perhaps unconscious libation
to the wee folk. Their activities are peculiarly dangerous to
cattle and to butter-making. Among the charms designed to
secure a good supply of butter in the churn we find the use of [751]
a horse-shoe, of a rusty nail from a coffin or the hand of a
corpse, of rowan branches, salt, a live turf, or a cross made of
veronica leaves.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

776 veronica leaves. In the North it is considered unlucky for a
789 person to enter a house where churning is taking place without
[777] "giving a brash," that is lending a hand at the churn-staff. In the words of a countryman in the west, "Queer things do happen to butter." Fairy tales are full of cattle and cattle-stealing: so are the epic tales. Writers of last century tell of cows that might be seen "with rags about their horns as a charm against the gentry," or gentle-folk, a name often applied to the fairies.

824 This brings us to the fairy or gentry thorns, skeaghs, or lone bushes, that is the solitary whitethorn trees which are regarded with dread. These trees, which must be counted by the thousand, are said "never to have been planted but to have grown of their own accord." They may be found on ancient monuments or alongside holy wells but the great majority are scattered through the fields, and it is worthy of notice that the cult is at least as strong in the Protestant north-east as in other parts of the country. A venerable thorn, pink-flowering, stands under my window as I write and casts its shadow into the Senate Room of the University. But no one will remove it or even lop its branches, and the story goes that when the buildings were being erected, the plans had to be changed in order that the thorn should not be interfered with. If a lone tree surrounded by half a dozen scientific departments has claimed such respect it can be imagined in what awe the country thorns are held! See Tailpiece.

It has recently been suggested that the veneration of thorn trees was a Belgic custom introduced to Ireland some 2,000 years ago, but it seems more likely that as with sacred stones and wells we should look even further away in time and space to Mediterranean origins and regard the cult of trees as part of the nature worship connected with man's first use of the Irish soil. Certain thorns dedicated to Irish saints figure also
[964] in ceremonies of burial: when funerals pass by they halt and stones are placed beside the thorn until they have become cairns. Wayside cairns, in the form of memorial monuments,

777 bless it," and any evil or illness happens afterwards, the chances are
that the blame will be put on the "bad eye." The evil-eye may be
[788] rendered harmless by making the sign of the cross in the name of the
Trinity.

There is an old woman in Bofin who is considered to be a witch,
754 and is said to be in the habit of putting the "bad eye" on people and
on domestic animals.

825 There are several beliefs about beasts and birds, such as that the
barnacles on the logs of drift wood, which often come ashore, develop
821 into geese, and that a gale of wind may be brought on by the simple
expedient of putting a black cat under a pot. Seals are thought to be
enchanted men, and will dive if they see a priest or a man in a black
coat; their appearance is said to portend bad weather. Who these
825 enchanted men were, and by whom they were placed under the enchantment, I could not ascertain, but the following mention of this
belief is made in a footnote by the late Mr. Hardiman, in his edition
of O'Flaherty's "H'Iar Connaught" (p. 27):—

"Many traditions, connecting these harmless animals with the
marvellous, are related along our western shores. Among these there
is one of a curious nature, viz. that at some distant period of time
several of the Clan Coneelys (Mac Conġaile), an old family of Iar
Connaught, were by "Art magick," metamorphosed into seals! In
some places the story has its believers, who would no more kill a seal
or eat of a slaughtered one than they would of a human Coneely. It
[551] is related as a fact that this ridiculous story has caused several of the
clan to change their name to Conolly."

776 Fairies are firmly believed in by many, and one man who is subject to epileptic fits relates long stories of his dealings with them.

Many tales are told about them and their doings, but few of them can be collected by a stranger, as the people are very reticent on the subject. They are supposed to exercise a malign influence on infants, especially before baptism, stealing them if good-looking, and supplying their places with puny, wizened changelings. These are got rid of, and the true child recovered by very simple means; it is only necessary to light a large fire and put on the pot to boil, and then to threaten the changeling that he will be boiled, when he will vanish, and the lost child be found in his place.

[775] Woman who die in childbirth or from puerperal fever are believed
to be carried away by the fairies to act as wet-nurses.

776 Mrs. Allies informed me that her baby is regularly spat upon by
854 the people when its nurse takes it out, in order to keep off the fairies

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894

ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Inishbofin

or the influence of the evil-eye; and that she had been told by some of 776 the people that they had seen little men, dressed in green, and headed [854] by two others dressed in black, running over the hills.

In a recent Paper,[1] Professor A. C. Haddon gives the following:— "In Innisbofin, Co. Galway, the people have a very firm belief in fairies. Mr. Allies, who resides there, informed me that one old man told him that he saw a number of fairy girls, dressed in brown, around him one day when he (Mr. Allies) was shooting rabbits. Mr. Allies offered £50 if a fairy could be shown to him, and £100 if he took a photograph of one. Mr. Allies has not yet paid away any money. Mr. Allies and his brother were quarrying a rock by the side of the harbour, and at last the men refused to work at it any longer, as it was so full of 'good people' as to be hot."

It is remarkable that the leprachaun does not appear in any of the fairy tales of these islands, though the fir dearg figures largely in them.

1. *Customs.*—The old customs kept up here are said not to be numerous. Wakes and funeral observances have been already referred 372 to (p. 352). Beltane-fires are lighted on St. John's Eve, round which 796 the people gather, and, when the fire becomes low, they leap through the smoke over the embers.

The custom of chasing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, so common [184] throughout the greater part of Ireland, is said not to be known here.

There are two holy wells on the islands, one, Tober Flannain, in 312 the graveyard close to Tempull Colman, in the townland of Knock, is 778 reputed to have worked many marvellous cures; and the other, Tober 755 Leo, on Inishshark, not far from the cloghan of the saint, is also of great local fame.

For the following note on Inishshark, I am indebted to Mr. 172 Michael Lavelle:—

"There is yet shown a ruin called Cloghan Leo, in which he (St. 778 Leo) is said to have dwelt; also fourteen stations, to each of which on certain days these people make a holiday, and pray there for the day. There is also a blessed well, called Thobar Leo, at which they pray; 778 and after praying during the day, they go and sleep in the place mentioned above (Cloghan Leo), but it is now almost to the ground.

"On one of the stations is a granite stone which is hollowed out

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[1] "A Batch of Irish Folk-Lore." Professor A. C. Haddon, *Folk-Lore*, vol. iv., p. 49.

775 bank by the roadside; after a time it rises, walks across the road to the mound, and then vanishes.

The ghost of Major —— is reported to be sometimes seen riding a phantom horse at a spot near Carn, and circles on the grass are pointed out as marking the scene of his equestrian feats; he is also said to ride at times to Bingham Castle.

●776 There is a strong belief in fairies, and many people are to be found who say that they have seen them. They are said to dance at night and cause fairy rings; they dwell in grassy mounds and travel from place to place, using stems of the ragweed as horses.

The mirage which is sometimes seen off the coast is ascribed to [822] the fairies if it assumes the appearance of boats or ships; they are believed to have been seen to land on the shore, haul up their boats, and vanish. Many stories are told respecting the impudent pranks of these beings, and to their revenge for some injury, disease in man and cattle is sometimes ascribed. A man may become paralysed or waste away and die from fairy influence as well as from the evil eye, but their malice may have a less serious ending, and may only produce some disfigurement. Some time ago a man was one day walking homewards, when he saw lying on the road a bright new razor; he picked it up and took it home with him, but after shaving [828] with it got *sycosis menti*, and the implement was then declared to be a "fairy razor."

Women dying in puerperal fever are believed to have been taken [775] by the fairies to act as wet-nurses, and infants may be "taken away," and changelings put in their places. The changeling may be got rid of by putting on a roaring fire and throwing him behind it, when he [372] at once vanishes in the smoke. The *ignus fatuus* is believed to be caused by the fairies to lead people astray.

The attentions of these creatures are not expended on human beings alone, for they may revenge themselves on those who vex them by attacking domestic animals. Cattle becoming ill suddenly are supposed to be "shot" by the fairies, and the owners will often go to a great deal of trouble to find a person who possess a "fairy [823] stone," which is the only remedy. These stones are treasured very carefully and are kept wrapped up in a piece of cloth; they are used by rubbing them on the afflicted animal, and repeating a charm or prayer. Unfortunately no specimen of these stones was seen, so it cannot be stated positively whether they are flint arrow-heads or not.

A farm-house at a place called Illaunglass, in the Mullet, has a tale connected with it, illustrating the causing of disease in cattle by

776 the fairies. A few years ago the cattle on this farm became ill, and one after another died; the people of the house consulted a "fairy woman," who told them that the cause of the disease was the defiling of the fairies play-ground, by allowing a manure heap on the south side of the house, but that if this were removed that all would be well. Her advice was taken, and from that day forth the illness ceased. Dirty water should not be thrown out at night for fear of offending the fairies.

178 789 Many of the old customs mentioned by writers of the earlier part of the century have become extinct. People from the mainland no longer bury their dead on Inishglora, and some other customs connected with this island have died out since it became uninhabited; the first that two people could not go together into one of the ruined cells or cloghans without breaking bread between them, neglect of which would cause one of the two to die within the year; the other that every visitor should kiss the wooden statute of St. Brendan.[1] Though these customs have gone, many still continue to exist—wakes, funeral customs, and straw-boys at weddings have been already mentioned; wren hunting is practised, and the "wran-bush" carried round on St. Stephen's Day, as in most other parts of Ireland. On St. John's Eve bon-fires, or Beltain fires, are lighted, and people used to jump through the smoke over them when they got low; many still endeavour on these occasions to take home a live coal to kindle their own fires with.

788 The sign of the cross is made over the mouth when yawning to avert evil. Hair-cuttings are carefully put away in a hole in the wall in order that strength may be preserved.

231 432 The sale of cattle is completed by dipping a stick in dirt, and marking the beasts therewith.

787 Girls sometimes try means of discovering what their future husband will be like. The following is a specimen:—On the first sight of the first new moon of the New Year, the girl kneels down and says seven "Our Fathers" and seven "Hail Marys"; then she takes some of the clay from under her left knee and puts it into a left stocking, which she then buries until retiring at night, when she takes it up and sleeps on it to dream of her future husband.

832 There is a love charm of a rather gruesome character which is still

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[1] It used to be the custom for all ships passing Inishglora to lower top sails in honour of St. Brendan; and it was believed that any man who thrice lifted the statue in his arms was rendered capable of helping women in difficult labours.—O'DONOVAN.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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his death to his interference with this figure. An Inishkea man spoke about the matter with much indignation even after the lapse of years, and said that they had never known misfortune or hunger in the island until after the distruction of this *neewoge*. 778

Many different accounts have been given of the image itself. One writer (C. O.) states that it was a stone figure of rude workmanship, and that it was dressed in a suit of homespun, renewed every year.

The description given by those who have seen it agree in stating that it was not a statue but a small flat stone. One informant believed it to be part of the head of a stone figure. This was enveloped in a small bag of homespun, which was replaced when it got old and soiled, and was kept in a blind window or recess in the wall in one of the houses.

St. Brendan and the Devil.—During my visit to Inishglora some of the Inishkea fishermen, who were camped there at the time, pointed out that no grass grew on a part of the island, and gave the following explanation:—St. Brendan was one day disturbed in his devotions by the devil, who appeared to him in the form of a beautiful girl and tempted him. The saint indignantly repulsed the temptress, and drove her towards the end of the island, blessing the soil as he went, but at the point where the grass ends, Satan changed his form and assumed the shape of a ram, which so astonished the saint that in his excitement he ceased blessing and gave chase to the evil one who ran to the rocks and jumped into the sea. The unblessed land is that on which the grass does not grow. 776 ●

VI. ARCHÆOLOGY.

The few notes made in this section do not purport to be fully descriptive, but merely to indicate the nature of the antiquities of the region, which are of importance in the study of the people as bearing on the history of their past, and to direct the attention of archaeologists to the quantity of material worthy of study and record which is still to be met with in this part of county Mayo. 172 178

1. *Survivals.*—The district is comparatively rich in these, though many articles in use in the localities previously reported on are now quite extinct in Erris. The primitive condition of many of the houses, the absence of chimneys, and the custom of taking cattle into the dwellings have already been referred to. 178

The quern is still in use in several houses, especially on the islands and in the remoter localities, though now only employed for 178 412

its old habits, as is illustrated by the persistence of cremation 174
rites from the earliest megalithic phase to the end of the Bronze
Age, almost on the threshold of the Christian era.

At some stage towards the close of the Bronze Age the expanding
Celtic culture, carried with the sword across western
Europe, was able to gain a foothold in the north-east, whence
in time it imposed itself and its language on the whole of Ireland
and later, by way of Argyll, on Scotland too. But the price of
this conquest was the loss of many elements of Celtic culture
or their adaptation to the Irish environment and to long-established
native tradition. The art of the Celtic overlords, for example,
quickly develops forms and features which are insular and
distinctively Irish. In other words there is more continuity of
folk ways throughout the prehistoric period in Ireland than in
Britain. And this Irish-Celtic civilization of the Early Iron Age
was able, during the following period, to maintain itself through
the centuries when the Roman Empire embraced nearly all
western Europe. The spirit of its art and life was almost untouched
by the mass-production and standardization of imperial
Rome. It survived long enough to be caught up and revitalized
in the late Celtic phase by the fervour of a Christian faith whose
adaptation to Celtic tradition is illustrated in Saint Columba's [776]
famous phrase: 'Christ is my druid'. It was a time of great
missionary enterprise, but at home its greatest achievement
was the taming of the damp lowland forests which earlier
peoples had shunned. Legendary history, now receiving confirmation
from archaeological research, tells of technological
advances and increasing population and settlement from about
the seventh century onwards.

Irish Christianity grew up within the forms of Irish life: 795
the church claimed no martyrs and there is little evidence of
conflict with older beliefs, which clearly were absorbed. The 175
Celtic church was peculiar in that the centres of its life were the
great monasteries: there were no cities to form the seats of
powerful bishops. Instead, the founders' kin retained the ownership
of the monasteries, and the Celtic tradition survived in
administration as in art and architecture. It was only after the
ravages of the Vikings and the reassertion of pagan cults that
the Irish Church was reformed by Saint Malachy, who established

social and family centre'.[1] The table has never supplanted the 352
fireplace as the focus of social living, a function it has served 592
since the dawn of humanity. As so often happens, folklore
endorses this finding: there is an Irish saying that it is unlucky
to shake hands across a table. The table or 'board', which in
the English language gave its name to a committee, has not
replaced the fireside as the place where the Irish countryman
talks—and talks business. When food is left out for the fairies [776]
or for visitors from the other world it is placed in front of the
fire, and at Hallowe'en seats for the returning dead were arranged [769]
around the fire.

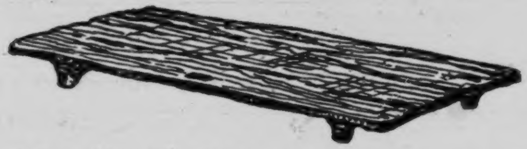

Fig. 26. Table, cut from the solid, from a Co. Armagh bog. It measures 20 in. by 12 in.

Similarly the fireside, not the table, attracted whatever means 354
of illumination was available. The hob-lamp took the place of the
table-lamp. Even when paraffin came in the oil lamp was still 373
hung in the chimney. The older native oils, derived from fish
and burnt in open lamps, were very unsavoury, and it was expedient
to allow the fumes to escape with the chimney smoke.
The iron crusie or open oil-lamp, its shape almost unchanged
since classical times, was to be seen nearly everywhere around
the coast until late in the last century (Fig. 27) but the paraffin
lamp quickly swept it out of existence. Medieval crusies from [171]
Spain, Italy and north-western Europe are very similar to
recent Irish examples, and it was from the Rhineland, it is said,
that the crusie was taken to Pennsylvania, where it first succumbed
to the new mineral oil. Stone moulds of uncertain age
known from Scotland and Ireland show how the iron pans were
hammered into shape. Inland, the place of the crusie was taken
by resinous splinters of bog fir kept by the fire till tinder dry,

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[1] Å. Campbell in *Folk-Liv* (1937), 234.

uncut bog above, but one suspects that behind the custom there 314 lies the widespread notion that a task should never be completely finished and that a small portion of anything taken by man should be left for luck or the fairies. You will be told that the steps are cut to avoid the curse of Columbkille, for it is [776] said that the saint was once trapped in a bog hole and laid a curse on all who did not cut the three steps.

There are two methods of cutting, vertically or 'underfooting' and horizontally or 'breasting', and they tend to be used respectively on thin upland and deep lowland bogs, though these have to be cut underfoot if badly drained unless a platform or 'foot-go' of flow turf can be built up for the breaster to stand on. Also, the upper layers of brown turf which preserve some of the tough plant fibres are easier to cut vertically. Breasting not only imposes less strain on the back but speeds up the work, since the turves can be retained on the slane and placed directly on the barrow. (The vertical digger can do this only if his spade has a lift, that is bends forward.) In consequence the [493] breast-cutter's turf-barrow will be designed for his convenience, for example it commonly has no legs so that he can swing it into position laterally by hooking the wing of his spade over the handle. Slanes, as well as barrows, will be found to vary in some 314 slight degree from one bog to another, and a seemingly trivial 412 difference can generally be explained in terms of differences of local conditions and techniques: the human ecology of the bogs is no less interesting than the plant ecology. In essentials the turf slane is a narrow straight-shafted steel blade with a wing set at right-angles after the manner of a cheese-knife, which is said, indeed, to owe its origin to 'an ingenious cutler of Dublin' who borrowed the idea from the slane.[1] The purpose of the wing is to detach a complete turf at a single stroke of the spade. The breadth and length of blade and wing are variables depending on many factors, but mainly on the size of turf required, and this in turn is determined to a considerable extent by the nature of the bog. If it is a very wet bog, for example, the turves must be cut larger than normal to allow for greater shrinkage on drying. When absolutely dry peat will shrink to less than one-eighth its original volume, and though air-dried peat still contains

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[1] Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland*, 96

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is that of St. Patrick's Purgatory, on a small island in Lough Derg in Donegal. Still a powerful attraction, it has been maintained since the early middle ages and has been described, with piety or derision, by innumerable writers since one of the earliest accounts was written by Giraldus Cambrensis, about 1185. The pilgrimage became very popular in the early nineteenth century, when the numbers of visitors are said to have averaged 10,000 annually. Mr. A. T. Lucas has shown that this pilgrimage resulted in the distribution through the country of certain portable wooden crucifixes popularly known as penal crosses.[1] Carved from the solid in a characteristic style, they bear dates between 1700 and 1830 (Fig. 84). It seems that they were sold to pilgrims at Lough Derg and taken home as souvenirs after being used in the devotional ritual. They were a local development, no doubt initiated by some peasant woodcarver, of simple crosses, consisting merely of two sticks tied together, such as are still made at some patterns and occasionally at the festivals of St. Briget and All-Hallows. In this way, as in sanctifying the gatherings themselves, Christianity has taken over the symbols and strength of the elder faiths.

The pilgrimage of Croagh Patrick, in Co. Mayo, is the most celebrated of those held at the end of July, involving the ascent of high mountains and marking, by tradition, the close of summer and the beginning of harvest, as discussed in the following chapter. Here we may quote once more the *Parliamentary Gazetteer* for 1845: 'No place in Ireland is the scene of more superstitious observances, or a more popular resort of pilgrims and devotees, or the site of more numerous small memorials of superstition, or the subject of more generally credited legends of hagiology. Vast crowds of miserable human beings . . . swarm all over its summit and sides and skirts; one grand current legend is almost everywhere believed in the teeth of all credulity, that St. Patrick gathered hither, and swept hence all venomous creatures in Ireland.'
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[1] A. T. Lucas, *Co. Louth Arch. Journ.*, 13 (1954), 145-74.

FIXED FESTIVALS

527 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through
the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on
● 776 the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare
a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so
that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of
harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a
[532] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried
[292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks
such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings,
and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit
[264] gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated
by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross,
[787] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made.
A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became
[789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work
which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the
saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the
kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for
the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral
promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk.
It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day
so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage
further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning
[805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of
winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The countryman
[221] likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day,
and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which
are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in
Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in
Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in
his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted
as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in
[191] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because
their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille,
Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies,
[824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he
rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

FIXED FESTIVALS

527 The May Festival, the Gaelic Beltane, remained almost untouched by Christianity, and an astonishingly rich growth of magic beliefs and superstitious customs accumulated around it. They were concerned with the safety of the familiar things which supported life, and especially the milk cows whose 'whitemeats' were to provide the main food-supply until harvest came round once more. It was a matter of pride to have a last formal dish of stirabout on May Day, 'for if they can hold out so well with bread they can do well enough . . . for then milk becomes plenty, and butter, new cheese, and curds and shamrocks are the food of the meaner sort all this season'.[1] It was considered [431] most unlucky and unwise to give away salt, water or fire on May Day lest the luck and 'profit' of the farm went with the gifts. Witches and fairies were unusually active at this time, and [776] many tales are told of the wiles they adopted to outwit the unwary and gain admission to house or byre to do their mischief. It was a wise precaution to pour milk on the threshold, or at the roots of a fairy thorn, and the many protective charms against the stealing of cattle and milk were augmented by others special to the occasion. 'On May Eve the peasantry used to drive all their cattle into old raths and forts thought to be much frequented by the fairies, bleed them, taste their blood, and pour the remainder on the earth'.[2] It was said that the ghosts of cattle that had been lost could be seen in such places.

527 824 751 Portents, prognostications and protection were sought in the familiar flowers of field and hedgerow, in the weeds and shrubs which had followed in man's footsteps and were associated with his secular struggle for survival, especially in those that carried the promise of butter in their golden cups and a free flow of milk in their bounteous white blossom. May flowers, primroses and gorse gathered before sunrise were scattered on the threshold of the house and garlands of 'Summer', as the flowers were called, were hung on the doorposts and even tied to the cows' tails. In the Antrim Glens the mayflowers were crushed to provide a juice with which the cows' udders were washed, and elsewhere buttercups were used for the purpose. Cow dung, if less hygienic, had similar protective power, presumably in

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[1] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 121.

[2] *U.J.A.* 3 (1855), 165.

XX

WEDDINGS AND WAKES

582 THE average age of marriage among Irish countrywomen,
178 about 28, is said to be higher than in any other country
in the world: that of the men is higher still, and in addition there
731 are many who never marry. These are among the demographic
●776 consequences of the economic and social changes which followed
the Great Famine of 1845–47, for down to that time the mass
of the population had nothing to lose and everything to gain by
marrying young. Among the economic factors which led to the
postponement of marriage may be mentioned the rising standards of living, the prohibition of the subdivision of holdings
so that only one son could inherit, and the need for larger farms
consequent on the decline of subsistence farming and the
increase of pastoral husbandry, which meant that the peasant
had to look and plan ahead. Equally important, I believe, was
the effect of the crisis of the famine in breaking down patterns
of behaviour which had continued with little change since
prehistoric times. The elder faiths were rudely shattered so
that today we have only the broken remnants left, stray survivals which have lost their meaning in a modern setting.
The scattering of the fairy hosts is the constant lament of old
people for whose parents they were a reality. Over large parts
of the country, down to famine times the fairies (among them
the ancestral spirits), and the powers of nature in sun and stone,
tree, flower and welling water were ruling forces whose malice
must somehow be averted, and whose beneficence must be
courted by magical acts. Nature's reproductive surplus on which
[842] human life depended could best be assured by breeding children
to capacity.

returned to its original position.'[1] St. Olan's Stone is a boulder 823
bearing impressions which are regarded as being the imprint 755
of the saint's feet. Many such marked stones, including some
which are clearly artificial basin stones, have been regarded [776] ●
with superstitious awe up and down the country and were
generally interpreted as the result of a saint's kneeling or
standing on the spot. It is natural to suppose that these hagiological interpretations were substituted for another set of beliefs which attached the virtues of strength, healing and fertility to cup-marked stones.

Not infrequently cup-holes are found bored through thin 823
slabs of stones, and these 'holed stones' are invested with aphrodisiac powers. We have referred to the ceremonies associated with the Ardmore stone in Chapter XIX, and the practice of erecting a stick or pole in similar stones at one of the major festivals is recorded from other localities. Wood-Martin wrote
of the Hole Stone at Doagh, Co. Antrim: 'Marriage contracts [584]
are still ratified at this spot, as country couples go there to signify their betrothal by clasping hands through the hole.'
Again, 'at the holed-stone of Clocnapeacaib, county Cork,
women were in the habit of drawing some of their clothes [844]
through a hole, when their confinement was approaching, to secure a favourable result, and a similar practice is followed in many other localities of women similarly situated drawing clothes through the perforated arms of ancient Irish circular-headed stone crosses'[2] (Pl. 15, 1).

Before leaving this subject I should refer to certain cup- 526
marks which have been utilized down to recent times for the purpose of making stone balls for the game of 'bullet-throwing'. Played along the country roads, and now prohibited in Northern Ireland because it endangers traffic, its main home is in Co. Cork, where it is known as bowling. One will occasionally surprise a game in progress in the Belfast hills or around Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, and it is here that stone bullets were manufactured within living memory. The 'bullet-holes', three to four inches in diameter and an inch or two deep, are worn in the flat tops of boulders in the process of hammering into a

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[1] P. J. Hartnett, *Béaloideas*, 10 (1941), 108.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 239–42.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A FOLKLORE SURVEY OF COUNTY CLARE.

(WITH PLATE XI.[1]).

131 COUNTY CLARE from the fourth century of our era was united
politically with North Munster, Tuath Mumhain, or Thomond,
631 though separated from it by the broad waters of the Shannon.
Standing thus by itself, "isolated by the Sea, the River, and the
enmity of Connaught," it might be expected that it would preserve
until modern times an unbroken tradition from the prehistoric
past, and that a survey of its folklore would show many traces
of ancient beliefs still surviving. The battle goddess *Catabodva*,
● 776 worshipped in antique Gaul, appears as the *Bodbh* of battle
(*cath*) in the wars fought by the Princes of Clare in 1014 and 1317,
787 and the spirit that washed the bloodstained clothes and limbs
of the then living combatants still, I was told three years ago,
foretells calamity by washing clothes in the same waters.[2] *Pēists*
or water snakes,—emblems, perhaps, of pagan islanders or devouring
seas and lakes,—abound in the legends of a very early
date, and are still reputed to seize the cattle, and even human
beings, drowned in the lakes of Clare. The place names con-
121 sidered below will show to what an extent our present nomen-
124 clature records the mythology and sagas of early days, and I
propose in the remainder of this first paper to deal with the banshee,
the death coach, and the fairies. The bulk of the traditions

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[1] This plate of the Ancient Parishes of County Clare has been kindly lent by the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, and appears in their *Proceedings*, S. III., vol. iv.

[2] Cf. the *lavandières de nuit*, discussed by Sébillot, *Le Folk-lore de France*, Tome iii.

[p.180]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

since 1790 has been collected from the mouths of the people, and 121
not from books nor from the notes of others, and I have tried, 124
where possible, to gather various versions of the legends without the dangerous aid of "leading questions."

I. *Place Names and Legends of Places.*

Were we assured of the date of their origin, place names would 103
be our most authentic, and perhaps our earliest, evidence of
traditional beliefs and superstitions, but their first records only 173
give a minimum date. To take a few examples:—if we may 776 ●
accept explanations earlier than A.D. 800, the name of Iniscatha, traceable from about 550, embodies the name of a monster, (probably the "god or demon of the flood"), dispossessed by St. Senan, the missionary of the Corcavaskin district.[3] Again, Craganeevul near Killaloe recalls the belief in Aibhill, or Aibhinn, "the beautiful," the tutelary spirit of the ruling house of the Dalcassians, the later O'Briens. If the "Life of St. Maccreiche" be early, it bears out a later belief that the cave of Poulnabruckee, in Inchiquin, commemorates no ordinary badger, but the formidable "demon-badger," killer of cattle and men.[4]

Following certain topographical lines I give the names as they 103
occur, rather than as grouped according to beliefs. I must also
premise that the Dalcassian tribes virtually covered the eastern 173
Baronies of Bunratty and Tulla, with part of Inchiquin, from about A.D. 377; the Corca Modruad, (the royal line of the mythical Queen Maeve and Fergus mac Roigh), were in Burren and Corcomroe from still earlier times, beyond the range of even historical tradition[5]; while a third great independent line, the Corca-

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[3] Colgan, "Vita S. Senani," *Acta S.S. Hib.* (March 8).

[4] This I suspect to have been really a belated bear, as that formidable beast, whose bones so abound in Clare caverns, perished at an unknown date, leaving his name "Mathgamhan," or Mahon, to his human enemies, and his remains as his only monument. Certain MacMahons, however, affected to believe that they were Normans originally named Fitz Urse, in the same way as the MacNamaras were supposed to be Mortimers (*de Mortuo Mari*) by Spenser and others in the time of Elizabeth.

[5] An account of a curious episode found in the legend of St. Mochulla, whose "Life" had been lost or taken from Ireland before 1637, has been preserved orally until recent years (see *Bunratty infra*, p. 184). The legends of the

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ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

earthquake and tidal wave that split into three Inis Fitæ[9] on the same coast (A.D. 799-802), incline one to believe in a basis for the legend. In Nonghaval is a fort called Liskeentha, from "fairy songs" heard there. Not far away, in Kilfenora Parish, we have a Boughil or "petrified boy," and in Carran Parish a Farbreag or "petrified man"; such names, originating in strangely-shaped rocks, are rather common. A third Firbolg brother, Daelach, gives his name to the little river Daelach and the townland Ballydeely. In Carran and Kilmanaheen the belief in the *phooka* or *púca*, a demon horse or goat, is stamped on the Poulaphucas, one of which has a fine dolmen; such monuments all over Ireland are found connected with the malignant prototype of Puck. Lisfarbegnagommaun, "the fort of the little men (playing at) hurling," commemorates fairy sports.

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[776]

Ibrickan.—Poulaphuca in Kilfarboy is, so far as I know, the only mythic name, but Doolough Lake (Nigricantis) is named in the early "Life of Senan"[10] as the prison of the fearful "Cata" of Iniscatha, while the "Legend of the sons of Thorailbh mac Stairn"[11] locates the cavern whence the ferocious "Faracat" launched itself on the heroes' spears, beside its waters. Dunbeg Bay is the scene of a curious merman story.[12]

Moyarta.—At Loop Head, the south-western extremity of the county, we find a Poulnapeiste and a line of forts,—Cahercrochain, Cahersaul, Dundahlin, and Cahernaheanmna,—connected with the monster killed by Dermod O'Duine and the brothers Crochaun, Sal, and Dahlin, whose sister ("the one (lone) woman") gave her title to the last fort.[13] Iniscatha commemorates its dragon, and Lisnarinka fort the "dances" of its fairy dwellers.

Clonderlaw.—Turning inland, up the Shannon and Fergus

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[9] Now Inniscaeragh or Mutton Island, Illaunwattle, Inismatail, or Mattle Island, and Carrickaneelwar. The first two are named Iniskereth and Inismatail in a charter of 1216.

[10] Colgan, *op. cit.* (March 8).

[11] A romance of about 1750, by Michael Comyn.

[12] Crofton Croker, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, 1825, vol. ii., p. 31, (The Soul Cages).

[13] "Adventures of the sons of Thorailbh"; see also *Ordnance Survey Letters*, Co. Clare, Killballyowen Parish, (MS., R.I. Academy).

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

103 banshees (see below). Knockaunamoughilly is named from a "Boughil," and other "sham men" appear at the Farbreagas
173 in Cloontra and Cloongaheen. Seefin in Kilseily is another "seat of Finn." Some names are more doubtful. Lough Graney, the river Graney, and Tomgraney, are attributed to a suspicious solar heroine, the lady "Gillagreine" or "Grainne of the bright cheeks."

II. *Banshees.*

173 Above the Shannon gorge, overlooking a beautiful mass of mountains, the southern arm of Lough Derg, and the river and
●776 Killaloe with its weirs, rises the great brown and purple bluff
133 of Craglea. Above the low earthworks and mound of stones
[192] that mark the ninth-century fort of Prince Lachtna ascends a rough lane. Further up on the east flank a little well, Tobereevul, gushes out from under a low rock amid the ferns,[19] and on the west side,—up a lonely valley, a long-forgotten battlefield, "Crag Liath where shields were cleft," in one of Brian Boru's earlier combats with the Norsemen,—rises a high crag called Craganeevul. The names of both well and crag commemorate the tutelary spirit of the House of Cass, Aibhill or, more correctly, Aibhinn, "the lovely one," once, it may be, the goddess of the House.

175 On Good Friday, A.D. 1014, Brian, the aged monarch of all Erin, knelt in his tent praying for victory, while the battle
776 raged over the low ridge now crowded by the houses of northern Dublin and on to the weirs of Clontarf. News came that his brave son's standard had fallen, and his page entreated him to ride back to the camp. "Oh, God! thou boy," cried Brian, "retreat becomes us not, and I myself know that I shall not depart alive, for Aibhill of Crag Liath came to me last night, and she told me that I should be killed today."[20] How many centuries of faith lay behind the king's fatalism, who can say? As the Gauls worshipped another banshee, Catabodva,

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[19] It still exists, though marked only "site of" in the new Ordnance Survey maps.

[20] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (Ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series).

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

as their war-goddess,[21] so, before the baptism of King 175
Cairthinn, (first Christian Prince of his House, about A.D.
430), the ancestors of the Dalcassians may have worshipped 776
Aibhinn on her holy hill, and her equally lovely sister Aine,
crowned with meadowsweet, on the tamer mound of Knockaney. Whether, if so, they found her already enthroned at
Craglea on their conquest of the district, or whether the
conqueror Lugad consecrated the mountains to his patroness,
it is now impossible to guess. Aibhill, as banshee, held her
own. We find her even usurping the place of the "Sybil" in
a translation of the *Dies Iræ*,[22] in unwonted companionship
with King David, and she was a commonplace of local
threnodies during the eighteenth, and even the nineteenth,
century. In the lake below Rathblamaic in Inchiquin she has [787]
down to recent years been seen, with the twenty-five other
banshees of Clare that call her their queen, washing clothes
before any impending disaster.[3]

The next appearance of a banshee in local history is of 175
a very different spirit three centuries later. The *Cathreim*
Thoirdhealbhaigh ("Triumphs of Torlough") was written probably 538
about A.D. 1350 by Seean mac Craith, the hereditary 776
historian.[23] It contains accounts of three spirit women,—one, the
"Sovereignty of Erin," being of surpassing loveliness, and the two
others, (if not the same,—"Dismal" and "Water Dismal"), of
loathsome hideousness. The hags, however, probably survive,
while the "Sovereignty" has perished. Bronach ("the sorrowful 175
or dismal one") of Ceann Boirne was known as the "Hag of 776
Black Head" from the modern name of the older Ceann (or 763
Rinn) of Burren. She was in full repute in 1839, and I have
heard of her vaguely about 1885 or 1887. In August, 1317, she

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[21] Cf. *Revue Archéologique*, N.S., vol. xviii. (1868), p. 1; Sir Samuel Ferguson's paper, from the Irish point of view, in *Dublin University Magazine*, Oct. 1834, p. 463; W. M. Hennessy, "The War Goddess of the Ancient Irish," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x., p. 425.

[22] Mss., Royal Irish Academy, 23.M.47.

[23] As yet only in manuscript,—one copy of A.D. 1509, and another probably from one of 1449. For its age see *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxxii., p. 139.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

175 ●776 763 was able to appear in "the dark before sunrise" and foretell destruction by words and hideous action. The supporters of Prince Murchad O'Brien, (then absent in Dublin), under his brother Dermot invaded the territory of his rival Prince Donchad O'Brien. The latter got together an army, "even the man in a souterrain (*uamh*) of a fort" being summoned, and marched round the site of the modern village of Ballyvaughan, his foe having sheltered in Corcomroe Abbey, in a nook of the bare hills some miles to the north-west. Approaching Lough Rasga, (still known as Rask), "they looked on the shining mere, and there they saw the monstrous and distorted form of a lone, ancient hag, that stooped over the bright Lough shore. She was thatched with elf locks, foxy grey and rough like heather, matted and like long sea-wrack, a bossy, wrinkled, ulcerated brow, the hairs of her eyebrows like fish hooks; bleared, watery eyes peered with malignant fire between red inflamed lids; she had a great blue nose, flattened and wide, livid lips, and a stubbly beard."[24] The writer adds detail on detail (some 90 in all), many too disgusting to copy. The hag was washing human limbs and heads with gory weapons and clothes, till all the lake was defiled with blood, brains, and floating hair. Donchad at last spoke. "What is your name and race, and whose kin are those maltreated dead?" She replied,—"I am Bronach of Burren, of the Tuatha Dé Danann. This slaughter heap is of your army's heads; your own is in the middle." The angry men raised their javelins, but she rose on the wind, yelling more and more words of woe till she vanished. "Heed her not," said Donchad, "she is a friendly *Bodbh* of Clan Torlough" (his opponents). The army hurried on to the ridge of the Abbey, where Donchad and all his kindred, save one brother, were slain before evening.

Not to the Irish alone did the banshee foretell ruin. In May, 1318, Richard de Clare, leader of the Normans, was marching to what he supposed would be an easy victory over the O'Deas of Dysert. The English came to the "glittering, running water of fish-containing Fergus," when they saw a horrible beldam

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[24] I have to thank Mr. Standish Hayes O'Grady for this and other extracts from the work, the translations in the library of the Royal Irish Academy being, (it is understood), very crude.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

washing armour and rich robes till the red gore churned and 175 splashed through her hands.[25] Calling an Irish ally to question 776 her, De Clare heard that "the armour and clothes were of the English, and few would escape immolation." 763 "I am the Water Doleful One. I lodge in the green fairy mounds (*sidh*) of the land, but I am of the Tribes of Hell. Thither I invite you. Soon we shall be dwellers in one country." Next day De Clare, his son, and nearly all his English troops lay dead upon the fields near the ford of Dysert for miles over the country in their flight.

The belief of the early eleventh and fourteenth centuries is still extant, for local legend near Dysert tells how Aibhill and twenty-five banshees washed blood-stained clothes in Rath Lake before "Claraghmore" (De Clare) fell, and that they still do so when mischief is afoot.[26]

For nearly 300 years there is no other Clare banshee tale, till [538] the famous one of 1642 in the *Memoires of Lady Fanshawe*, (published in 1665).[27] It is so well known that a brief abstract will suffice. Her Ladyship, staying with some of the O'Briens, was sleeping in a room, of which the window overhung water at some height, at a castle, perhaps Bunratty or Castle Lake. She was awakened by a horrible scream, and saw a girl outside the window. The apparition was pale, rather handsome, and with her reddish hair hanging dishevelled over her shoulders. After some time the unwelcome visitor vanished, with other ghastly shrieks. In the morning Lady Fanshawe, telling her tale, was told of the death of a relative of the family whose illness had been concealed from her. The spirit was that of the peasant wife of a former owner of the castle, drowned in the moat by her husband and of evil omen to his descendants.

The next story was told in my own family and, I understand, in that of the Ross Lewins. I have traced it to a daughter of Jane Ross Lewin, one of the girls who saw the banshee. It related to Jane's father, Harrison Ross Lewin of Fortfergus, who probably died in 1776, as his will, dated November, 1775, was proved in

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[25] Another "washer of the ford" appears in "Da Choca's Hostel," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxi. (1900), p. 157, and she is also a Bodbh.

[26] Told me by Prof. Brian O'Looney in 1890, and I have heard more recently of the existence of the belief.

[27] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 83-6.

14: Westropp B-4,.5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

175 March, 1777; but I have hitherto been unable to verify the
circumstances or place of his death. Mr. Ross Lewin had gone
763 to Dublin on business, the journey at that time taking five days,
776 and the several stages being Limerick, Nenagh, Mountrath, Kildare,
and Dublin. In his absence the "young people" went to a friend's house for the evening. The road passed an old church (Kilchrist), which was unenclosed, standing in an open field. As the party returned under bright moonlight, they were startled by loud keening and wailing from the direction of the ruin. Coming in sight, all clearly saw a little old woman with long white hair and a black cloak running to and fro on the top of the side wall, clapping her hands and wailing. The young men, leaving the girls together on the road, sent some of their number to watch each end of the building, and the remainder entered and climbed up on the wall. The apparition vanished as they approached the church, and, after a careful search, could not be found. The party, thoroughly frightened, hurried home, and found their mother in even greater terror. She had been sitting in the window when a great raven flapped three times at the glass, and, while she told them, the bird again flew against the window. Some days later, news arrived from Dublin that Ross Lewin had died suddenly on the very evening of the apparition and omen.

763 It is curious that an English family, no matter how long settled
in Ireland, should have acquired the ministration of a banshee,
776 but, besides the Ross Lewins, both the Stamers and the Westropps
were so endowed in Clare.[28] The Westropps had also death warnings in the shape of a white owl and the headless coach. This bird last appeared, it is said, before a death in 1909, but it would be more convincing if it appeared at places where the white owl does *not* nest and fly out every night. The banshee has been conspicuously absent of late years, although on the death of my father, the

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[28] Among families with banshees, Thomas Crofton Croker (*op. cit.*, ed. 1862, p. 115,) names old Englishry such as the Burkes, Rices, Husseys (the Norman, not the Gaelic, name), Trants, and Keatings. The FitzGeralds of Kerry and Limerick had also a banshee. Of the Clare families the Westropps came from Yorkshire, the Stamers from Essex, and the Lewins probably from Durham. Some banshees may have been acquired by marriage, for the three latter families were related to O'Briens, MacNamaras, and O'Gradys, to name only a part of their Celtic connections.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

late John Westropp, at Attyflin, in 1866, keening and weird lamentation, (probably of some of the country folk who held him in deep affection), were heard the same night by the servants and some of the family. When Mrs. Stamer died at Stamer Park, Ennis, in January, 1883, the banshee and death coach were also supposed to have been heard,—though far more satisfactory explanations of the noises were forthcoming. The popular belief in Clare is that each leading Irish race had a banshee, Eevul, the banshee of the royal O'Briens, ruling over twenty-five other banshees always attendant on her progresses. The stream from Caherminaun to Dough, (the Daelach), was called the "Banshee's Brook," and when, as sometimes happens after an unusually dry summer, the water gets red from iron scum, everyone is on the alert to hear the rustling flight of the banshee, (not apparently Eevul), and her attendants through the air. In the prevailing suspense someone generally succeeds, and then there is unrest and fear until a death removes the uncertainty. There are many other modern tales of banshees. Mr. Casey of Ruan heard a banshee cry at the death of his father. The late Dr. MacNamara of Corofin was similarly honoured; indeed, when his family lived at Ballymarkahan, near Quin, there were numerous "authentic instances" recorded. The Corofin banshees, however, did not lag behind the age by maintaining aristocratic prejudices, for one, at least, used to sit near the cross road leading to the workhouse and foretell the deaths of the poor inmates.[29]

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The most recent visit of a banshee told to me was in 1905,[30] and is sadly tame when compared with the stories of MacCraith and Lady Fanshawe. Some scattered cottages form a sort of suburb to Newmarket-on-Fergus at a temporary lake (or *turlough*) called Lough Gaish. The inhabitants were greatly alarmed by the loud and ghastly wailing of some unknown being on several successive nights. Local panic spread, and few ventured out after dark. Had any tragedy happened, the reputation of the banshee would have rested on a rock of belief for another generation; but nothing occurred, and it is now doubted "whether it was a banshee at all, at all."

[29] Told to Dr. G. U. MacNamara at Caherminane and Corofin.

[30] *By* Mrs. and Miss Neville and Miss G. C. Stacpoole *of* Newmarket.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

763 of Fortanne says that the coach was heard at the deaths of certain Westropps after 1873, but nothing happened after its last appearance.

The phantom of a coach and horse was seen not far from Corofin, at Cragmoher, not long since, but it is agreed that no death took place after the apparition. An equally vague story was told about 1870 at Attyflin by a very old woman, Norry Halloran, whom the sound of the coach pursued one dark evening for a long way, but it did not pass her door, and nothing happened afterwards.

IV. *Fairies and Fairy Forts and Mounds.*

● 776 MacCraith, in the *Triumphs of Torlough*, in describing the
prognostics of the death of Prince Donchad early in the fourteenth
823 century says that "lights shone on the fairy forts," and it has
[538] already been noted that the *sidhs* or fairy mounds were lodgings
of appalling apparitions, like Bronach when not at her proper residence in the lower deep. The *Dindsenchas*,—that early encyclopædia invaluable for everything but the reliable account of the origin of place names which it purports to be,—describes how a lady dwelling in such a mound sprang out at her would-be lover in the form of a dragon.[30] Probably such beliefs, and the consequent fear of irate and deadly beings in earthworks, have helped until recent years to preserve the residential earthen "forts," although the ring walls were destroyed with but little scruple. Nevertheless the son of a farmer named Nihill told me in 1892 that, after some days wreckage and removal of the outer wall of the fine triple stone fort of Cahercalla, near Quin, his father was stricken with acute pain, and only recovered from his illness when the work was stopped,—whence this interesting ruin has been preserved to the present day. A certain landlord, still living, nearly lost the use of one eye from the dust of an explosion when blasting a rock in an earth fort which was being removed, and this incident has upheld the faith and fear of the fairies in north-eastern Clare. A locally famous "astronomer" and weather prophet tried, many years ago, to blast a dolmen in Inchiquin Barony, and a splinter hit his hand, which was badly injured and

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[30] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv., p. 441.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

afterwards festered. The wreckage of the dolmen was lying 776
untouched on the ground a few years ago. The collapse of a
calf shed on its occupants followed the demolition of Templenaraha 823
oratory for building the unstable structure;[37] this might be ascribed to a more sacred anger than that of the fairies, but the oratory stood in a ring fort. Another case of supposed vengeance occurred near Lehinch on the Atlantic. Some workmen were employed to level the earthworks of Dooneeva,[38] a fort on a low cliff at the end of the bay and near the modern Protestant Church. The man who originated this outrage was digging at the mounds when he fell to all appearance dead. The news was at once taken to his wife, a reputed "wise woman," and she ran to a "fairy spot" and "did magic." She then went to her apparently lifeless husband, and ordered the fairies in a peremptory way to restore him at once and take his stick. Then, before everyone, the stick vanished, and the "dead man" sat up none the worse for his "rapture to the land of faëry."[39] The date of this event could not be fixed, but it seems to be attributed to the period before 1840, and Dooneeva seems to have been in its present condition in 1839.

Two forts named Lissardcarney and Ballyhee in Templemaley Parish were in 1839 reputed strongholds garrisoned by troops of fairies. The songs of the fairies were heard in Cahernanoorane in Inchiquin, and Leskeentha near Noughaval.[40] They danced in the Lisnarinkas, played "hurley" in Lisfearbegnagommaun, and laid in wait to worry the belated traveller in Rathfollane and a small fort near the rectory, to the south of it, near Newmarket-
on-Fergus. Fairies haunted the well of Tobesheefra, while even 776
at the holy well of the powerful and vengeful St. Mochulla at 789
Fortanne milk was once offered to them. The butter had refused
to "come," and the mistress of the house, (a Protestant woman 823
of good birth and fair education), as she told me herself about 1878, took some of the refractory milk to the well, made the sign

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[37] Told to Dr. G. U. MacNamara about 1907.

[38] *Not* Doonmeeve as on the Ordnance Survey maps.

[39] Told to Miss Diana Parkinson. I heard it locally, but more vaguely, in 1907.

[40] Local traditions, 1904, 1908.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

● 776 of the cross over it, said the Lord's Prayer, dug a hole in the mud
823 at the well with her left heel, and went away without looking back.
[789] As might have been expected, the butter had "come" by the
time she had got home again, and she used to quote the case as
"proof positive." Besides the forts and wells, the dolmens are
believed to have been fairy homes, but in my enquiries since
776 1892 I have never been able to authenticate a case of offerings
782 at them of milk and butter, although small basins like the Swedish
"elf mills" are found in the covers of more than one of these
823 structures, and large *bullauns* or basins at others, such as Ballyganner Hill near Noughaval, Cappaghkennedy on the hills above Corofin, and Newgrove and Kiltanon near Tulla in eastern Clare. Food and drink, however, have been, until at least the present century, set out in plates and cups in Inchiquin and Moyarta Baronies, and in the latter, on the Shannon bank, the slops were thrown out and clean plates, water, chairs, and a well-swept hearth left by a punctilious servant for fairy guests in 1888 or 1889.

776 The greatest fairy monarch in Clare was "Donn of the Sandhills" (now the golf links), near the old castle of Doogh, (*i.e.*
823 Dumhach or Sand Dune), near Lehinch. He, or one of the other fairy princes named Donn, appears in a list of the divine race of the Tuatha Dé Danann,[41] and is therefore of the family of the Dagda, and, it may be presumed, a lineal descendant of the ancient Ana, Mother of the Gods. A well-known Irish scholar and antiquary, Andrew MacCurtin, before 1730 addressed a political petition to Donn of Dumhach complaining, like most Irish antiquaries, of the neglect of the gentry, and praying for any menial post at his Court.[42] As there was none that answered, the petitioner had to rest content with the hospitality of the MacDonnells of Kilkee and the O'Briens of Ennistymon. Donn's heartless conduct met poetic justice, for he has ever since "lacked a sacred bard," and, save for a slight uneasiness in a few poor old people passing across the sandhills after the golfers have left and the sun has set, he is now all but forgotten. In another poem of MacCurtin's, on a monk's horse "overlooked" and killed by the evil eye, or by the look of a red-haired woman, or

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[41] *Cath Finntraga* (ed. Kuno Meyer), p. 15.

[42] Mss. Royal Irish Academy, 23. M. 47.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

by "the stroke of a fairy," the poet recommends the holy man to get the aid of a local practitioner of renown, Peter the Fairy Killer.[43] 776 823

In recent years I have met only one sign of true respect for the "Sheevra" race. A small patch of land was left untilled in the midst of a cornfield at the end of the steep descent from Carran old church to Eanty in the Burren. It was left for three years amidst the tillage, and then the field was allowed to return to grass. The owners obviously disliked to explain the matter, but the act was clearly understood in the neighbourhood as a concession to the spirits of the field when the grass land was broken up for the first time in human memory.[44]

The appearances of the fairies also seem now very rare indeed. At Newmarket-on-Fergus, a centre of much folklore, we find that, besides the two forts named above and a low earth mound (perhaps sepulchral), only one spot has been honoured by an actual apparition in the last ten years. In this case a man walking on the Ennis road, not far from Lough Gaish, saw a very little man neatly dressed in green and walking on the path. Suspecting the green man to be a *leprechaun*,—and hence an owner of gold,—the Clare man tried to grasp him, but the sprite vanished out of his hands.[45]

The "literary movement" will probably affect the folklore very soon, as it is already affecting historical tradition,—which is shown by the variations in certain legends collected at long intervals at the same sites. By some the Danann have been identified with the Danes as "fort builders." If this were so, why did Dane's fort become Caher Loghlanach, (Caher Loglin, 1652), and similar forms? The people once knew better, for forts were attributed to all sorts of times and races, not only to members of the Tuatha Dé Danann, but also to Firbolgs and mythical persons such as Aenghus, Eerish, Eir, Farvagh, and 776 538

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[43] *Ibid.* 23. K. 10.

[44] It was certainly not the darker belief that in Scotland dedicated an offering to the one called euphemistically "The Goodman," nor like the sheaf sometimes dedicated to Brigit and other saints in West Munster, or, indeed, in other parts of Ireland.

[45] Collected by Miss Katherine Neville. The sprite was, of course, proved not to be a *leprechaun*, as that being can be held by the eye alone.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

776 Croaghan, and Celts such as Lachtna (A.D. 820-840), and Brian
538 Boru (A.D. 980-1014). In one notable instance, King Conor (A.D.
1242-69) is the reputed builder of the great stone fort of Dun Conor
in Aran, which in the eleventh-century legend is evidently connected
with Conchiurn or Conchraed the Firbolg,—a relation accepted
in 1685 by Roderic O'Flaherty, although he called its hero
"Conquevar" (*i.e.* Chonchobhar or Conor). Any modern allusion
to the Danann is therefore "suspect." Many visits to the recesses
of the hills in Burren from 1878 onwards,—and I may add that
776 the same is true of the rest of Clare,—only gave me, in 1905, one
788 direct reference to the Danann.[40] At the natural moat crowned
823 by the small stone ring wall of Croaghateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna,
we were told to cross ourselves as a protection against the Danann.
The place was, nevertheless, undoubtedly regarded by the older
people living near it as a most dangerous fairy fort, and we were
told how certain badger hunters,—(who brought drink with them),
—after a long festival on its summit got benighted there; they
eventually returned home sobered by fright, as they suddenly
"saw the whole fleet" of "them" coming up the mound, and
escaped only just in time.

776 The "whirlwinds" along dusty roads and sudden gusts were
788 not long ago everywhere supposed to be caused by the progress of
821 fairy beings. The older folk believed, and trembled,—crossing
themselves, or saying a word of prayer,—while the younger folk,
more than half in jest, raised their hats, as is still sometimes done
to the unlucky "single magpie" and the weasel.

776 I know of two cases of reputed changelings. My second sister,
whose delicacy, when an infant, excited remark, was, about 1842,
taken out by a servant to be exposed on a shovel on the doorstep
at Carnelly. The angry and hasty intervention of another servant
saved the child, but the would-be "exposer" was convinced of
the propriety of her attempt "to get back the real child" from the
fairies. A very old woman, Kate (Geerin) Molony, a henwife at
Maryfort, near Tulla, whom I faintly remember in 1869, was many
years before anxious about her little daughter's failing health, and
went to a "wise woman," who assured her that the child was
"changed." She spoke of this on her return, and unfortunately

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[40] Apart from Lon, at Slievnaglasha, and the "hags."

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

the patient was old enough to understand the fearful decision. 776
The poor child turned over on the bed with a groan, and was a little later found to be dead.

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

(*To be continued.*)

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

VI. *Underground Folk.*

776 To underground folk, other than fairies, I have only found few and uninteresting references, such as,—"an old woman looked out of the side of the fort, and the man ran away"; "he heard *them* talking inside the hill"; and "the little old man came out of the fort, and shut it behind him."

VII. *Water Spirits and Mer-folk.*

103 773 776 The Shannon, according to the *Dindsenchas*, derived its name from a sea-lady, but evidently not a "water-breather." Sinenn, daughter of Lodan, came from *Tir-tairngire*, the Land of Youth, under the sea, to visit the well of Connla, under the river now called Shannon. She came to Linn na feile, but was drowned at Tarrchinn "on this side Shannon," and gave her name to the great river.[3] A water spirit, or mermaid, is remembered at Killone Lake and Newhall. The legend is preserved in several variants. In 1839 it was told how O'Brien of Killone saw a lovely girl in the lake, and caught her. Bringing her home, he found to his great disgust and disappointment that she had a fish's tail. He ordered her to be kept in a "crib," and fed and well-treated. As she never spoke, a local fool threw scalding water on her to make her say something. He was only too successful, for, after a wild, blood-curdling shriek, she cried:

"As the return of the salmon from the stream,
A return without blood or flesh,
May such be the departure of the O'Briens
Like ears of wild corn from Killone."[4]

773 776 The legend recorded, almost at the same time (1840), by Crofton Croker was told to me by the old peasantry, about 1876, as follows:—A mermaid used to swim up a stream that flowed under the cellars of Newhall, in order to steal wine. The "master" (an O'Brien), or the butler, hid and stabbed her, (or threw her into a tub of scalding water where she became a big lump of jelly), and her blood ran down the stream and

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[3] "The Dind Senchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), p. 456.

[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii., p. 111.

[p.203]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

773 reddened all the lake. As the wounded being floated away she
● 776 wailed :—

> "As the water maid floats weak and bloodless down the stream
> So the O'Briens shall go from Killone."

Prof. Brian O'Looney heard in his youth, and told me, a tale nearly identical :—

> "As the mermaid goes on the sea,
> A wretched victim devoid of flesh and blood,
> So shall the race of O'Brien pass away
> Till they leave Killone in wild weeds."

The lake, like the stream already noted at Caherminaun, turns
red at times from iron scum and red clay after a dry summer.
[823] This is supposed to be caused by the local Undine's blood,
and to foretell a change of occupants in Newhall. Strange to
say, I saw it happen last when the place was let by the
MacDonnells to the O'Briens. The cellar at Newhall has its
outer section roofed with large slabs, and the inner consists of
long, low, cross vaults. In the end of the innermost recess is a
[342] built-up square patch, which sounds hollow, and is said to show
the opening closed to keep out the thievish mermaid. There
seems no evidence of any stream running underneath the cellar,
but local tradition tells of a vaulted passage down to the lake.

776 Sruhaunaglora (prattling brook), in Kilseily on the flank of the
eastern hills, probably owes its name, as many brooks their
[103] legend, to the supposed talking of water-folk. There was some
belief in mer-folk at Kilkee before 1879, but it has nowadays got
touched-up for tourists. Such touching-up, however, cannot have
affected the ugly, drunken, stupid *merrow* Coomara (sea-dog),
who kept the souls of drowned sailors in magic lobster-pots
in his house under the sea, off Killard, as related by Crofton
Croker.[8] The *merrow's* power of passing through the waves
depended on a magic cap, and a duplicate of it enabled his
human guest to visit him.

The last reported appearance of a mermaid is so recent as the end of April, 1910. Several people, including Martin Griffin, my informant, saw what they are firmly convinced was a mer-woman in a cove a little to the north of Spanish Point, near Miltown,

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[8] *Op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), pp. 30-58 ("The Soul Cages").

[P. 204]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Malbay. She was white-skinned and had well-shaped white hands. The party tried to make friends with her, giving her bread, which she ate. Then a Quilty fisherman got frightened, said she was "something bad," and threw a pebble at her, on which she plunged into the sea and disappeared. Soon afterwards King Edward died. An old man at Spanish Point said the last mermaid was seen the year of the Great Famine (1846), and that such an appearance foretells a public disaster. 776 [787]

VIII. *Ghosts and Haunted Houses.*

Here, "where'er we tread is haunted," and libellous, ground, so that in the majority of cases the names and definite addresses must be withheld, although in every case I am acquainted with them. 775

Taking first the ancient buildings, I am unable to state the nature of the haunter of Lisananima (ghost fort) in Kilcorney, or of the other places of like name, although, as regards the former, Dr. George MacNamara and I did our best, about 1897, to find out, for the ghost was said to have been seen recently; so also at Toberatasha (spectre well). At Lisfuadnaheirka, near Kilkee, we were told in 1896 of a "horned ghost," but "Fuadnaheirka" was a local "terror by night" who slew people, as Eugene O'Curry says his bare legs knew when, (as a boy in 1816), he lived close to Dunaheirka (or Liscroneen), a large fort, which was the chief seat of this being, and was evidently a place to be run past on dark winter evenings.[6] It is not wonderful that stories should be so vague. A form "that shape has none" terrifies some nervous or drunken person, who afterwards speaks often of the ghost, but can give no details. The subject is usually regarded too seriously for verbal embroidery.

A fisherman, being detained on Scattery Island by a storm early last century, and hence unable to attend mass at Kilrush, went up into the "cathedral"[7] to pray. After a time he looked up and saw a crowd of monks and laity with priests at the altar in

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[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol i., pp. 370 *et seq.*

[7] This is the Church of St. Mary near the Round Tower.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

IX. *Supernatural Animals.*

776 There is a rich fauna of supernatural animals in the county, even snakes being represented in it. There can be little doubt that the highly imaginative early Irish personified the more terrifying powers of nature, such as the sea, the storm, and the thunder. The roaring, writhing waves in a sea creek or river swirl may have suggested some great creature, (too great to be natural), wallowing under the waters, and so given rise to the endless *péist* names and legends, in which a distinction is never drawn between the spectral and the natural.

[136] *Péists.*—Ireland, although free from serpents at all times known to science, was yet much dominated by them mentally. Probably no lake of any importance in Clare was untenanted by a serpent, a wonderful animal, or a city. A *péist* could, however, be chained or slain by a hero or saint, and the majority of the *péists* were believed to have been eliminated by such warriors in the same way as the bear and, later, the wolf were cleared away by ordinary mortals. *Péist* only meant beast, and seems to mean no more in many place-names not belonging to lakes or river pools. Cappanapeasta near Inchicronan need not imply a monster, but Poulnapeasta we may always venture to translate as "water dragon's lair." There are many examples in tradition of the "dweller in the waters," "the serpent-god of this hallowed stream." In the *Hunting of Sliabh Truim* we find a *péist* with "ears as large as the gate of a Cathair" (stone fort) and "tusks as big as a tree."[1] The saga of *Da Derga's Hostel* brings into one the Norse, Irish, and Hebrew beliefs of the *péist*, Midgard Snake, and Leviathan by its tale of the "Leuidan, that surrounds the globe and strikes with its tail to overturn the world."[2] The *Feis tighe chonain* and *Hunting of Sliabh Truim* are full of allusions, and contain a dialogue with a Grecian *péist*, and tell how Finn slew spectres, arrachs, and aimids (women bugbears), and "banished from the raths (earth forts) each *péist*." Even in a nearly contemporary history of a hero of the time of Canute, a

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 115.

[2] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xxi., p. 54.

[p. 212]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date) 1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Clare prince Murchad, son of King Brian, and, like his father, slain at the moment of victory in 1014, is described as "the second powerful Hercules who destroyed and exterminated *piists* and monsters."[3] It is interesting to note how the deserted forts, even in pre-Norman times,[4] were believed to be the haunt of strange monsters, and to afford an equivalent to "big game shooting" for the local warriors:

> "He slew the spectre of Drom Cliabh,
> And the spectre and serpent of Lough Ree.
> Fionn banished from the raths
> Each piast he went to meet.
> A serpent in the refulgent Shannon
> He slew by frequenting the "lake.""[5]

First in importance amongst the *piists* is the "Cata." St. Senan (about A.D. 500) found that this monster dwelt in Iniscatha, now Scattery, in the estuary of the Shannon, where Finn had killed a like infester. The Cata devoured the saint's smith, Narach, but Senan brought him forth again alive. The subsequent combat promised great things, but ended tamely. The Cata advanced "its eyes flashing flame, with fiery breath, spitting venom and opening its horrible jaws," but Senan made the sign of the cross, and the beast collapsed and was chained and thrown into Doolough near Mount Callan (the black lake, "Nigricantis aquae juxta montem Callain in Tuamonia").[6] In the oldest (metrical) Life of Senan, the *piist* appears as the "immanis bellua" or "bestia," while Iniscatha is rendered "Belluanam Insulam." The legend is alluded to even in the late eighth-century *Calendar of Oengus* under March 8th, "Senan of InisCathaig gibbetted Naroch's foe." The story is remembered widely, and among all

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[3] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series), p. 187. This curious and bombastic panegyric proves statistically that the valour of Murchad was $\frac{1}{147}$th part of that of Hector of Troy, who was seven times more valiant than the Tuatha Dé Danann god Lug-long-hand.

[4] The Normans held similar beliefs. Giraldus Cambrensis gives an account of spectral apparitions in a fort during the conquest of Leinster.

[5] *Transactions of the Ossianic Society*, vol. vi.; cf. vol. ii., p. 58.

[6] Prose Life of St. Senanus, Colgan, *Acta S. Hib.*, under March 8th, Section xxxviii. See also Wh. Stokes, *Lives of the Irish Saints from the Book of Lismore*.

[P. 213]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date) 1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

classes at Scattery and along both banks of the river, at Kilkee, Kilmihil, and round Doolough and Miltown Malbay. In the fifteenth-century details of the "Cathedral" of Scattery a large-eyed dragon with crocodile jaws is conspicuous; there was another carving at Kilrush; and a third,—the "pattern-stone" removed from Scattery and until lately at Kilkee,—showed the Cata as "the amphibious beast of this blessed Isle," a nondescript creature with spiked back, scales, fish tail, nose curling up spirally, and clawed forefeet.

St. MacCreehy, a generation later than Senan (about 580), rivals the latter as a "dragon queller." He subdued the "Bruckee," a demon badger (*broc sidh*), at Rath Blathmaic near Inchiquin, which slew men and cattle and resisted the prayers of six local saints.[7] MacCreehy by his holiness soon overpowered and chained it; the aged saint then threw it

> "Deep in that forgotten mere
> Among the tumbled fragments of the hills"

below the hill of Scamhal (or Scool) where its den Poulnabruckee (Poll na broic sidhe) is still shown. As already suggested (p. 181) the Bruckee may have been a bear, and "a terrible bear,—he is death to a herd of cattle" in *Bricriu's Feast*[8] sounds like an allusion to a common occurrence. The Bruckee on "MacCreehy's tomb" in Kilmacreehy church, on the shore of Liscannor Bay, is exactly like the Cata carvings in Scattery, with long pointed ears, large eyes, and huge jaws blunt-ended, but bristling with pointed teeth. In the fifteenth century it had become a dragon in local belief.

Another Bruckee haunted Shandangan Lough near Corofin, a little pool famous, when I first knew it, for remarkable changes of colour. There are two funnel holes, eight to ten feet wide, full of water, in the soft ground near the pool which are still

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[7] See Plate XIV., p. 340, *ante.* O'Curry, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, vol. iii., p. 322; *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxix., p. 249.

[8] P. 64 (ed. *Irish Texts Society*). However, if the animal was common in the literary period, one might expect that the Life of King David would have suggested an Irish counterpart to the monks. Fights with the wolf are practically absent from Irish tales, and it seems safer to regard the identity with the bear of the badger "as big as a cow" as a mere speculation.

[P. 214]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

regarded with fear and suspicion. Ned Quin of Coad, a honest truthful man who died about eight years ago, firmly believed that he had seen the Bruckee in this lake. When he and a man named Pilkington were passing by, they saw a brown hairy monster swimming and plunging in the water, and it had eyes as large as turnips.[9] It was probably a "tussock" of peat and coarse grass that had, as often happens, fallen off the crumbling shore. There is no tradition that this pest was confined by the local sainted lady (Findclu) Inghean Baoith.

John Windele, amongst much speculation as to there being a dragon temple (*dracontium*) at Scattery and others at Loop Head in Clare and at Dun Farvagh in the Middle Isle of Aran, asserts, on the authority of *The Adventures of the Three Sons of Thorailbh*, a romance written in 1750, that several other formidable monsters belong to this district.[10] These were the Faracat,[11] Fearboc or Fearbach, and three other dragons, the spawn of the "all-devouring sow, on the rock of Cruine" reared by "the red demon of Doolough." Comyn, in the same romance, derives the name of Illaunmattle, an island off the neighbouring coast, from the Matal, a formidable beast, (perhaps a demon boar), defeated by the same heroes.[12] How far those of Comyn's stories without local attestation are genuine folklore is doubtful. Akin to these monsters is the mighty serpent hunted and slain by the O'Briens' army down the valley of the Daelach in Corcomroe. They stoned it with rocks which still form the great cairn of Carnconnachtach, near Ennistymon, over its remains.[13] This cairn, being at Ballydeely (Daelach's town *par excellence*), may have been the reputed tomb of the Firbolg chief Daelach, son of Umór, and is almost certainly the "Carn mic Tail" where the O'Conors of Corcamodruad inaugurated their chiefs.

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[9] So Dr. G. U. MacNamara.

[10] Windele, *Topographical MS.* (Royal Irish Academy), p. 31 *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 350.

[11] *Ante*, p. 183.

[12] The Mata, a giant, many-legged, and carapaced monster, infested the Boyne valley, and left a pyramid of its bones in the cemetery of Brugh. See "Dindsenchas," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xv. (1894), pp. 292, 329.

[13] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 309.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

●776 These beliefs are obviously early, as in the "Agallamh" of *The Book of Lismore*[14] is a lough *péist* which kills men and hounds, and *The Book of Feenagh* tells of "Loc na pesti," where a hideous *péist* slew 900 youths as they bathed. The *Seanchus Mór* has a lake monster, the Murdris, which expands and contracts like a smith's bellows. The same idea takes shape in the reputed gigantic (if not supernatural) eels and pikes in certain lakes. An enormous pike haunts Gurteen Lough, an old property of the Stamers, in Lower Bunratty. The peasants dare not bathe in its waters, and believe they have seen in the dusk a huge misty form in the lough and even crawling up its shores, whence it has frequently carried off lambs, and even calves.[15]

Bulls.—In ruins and hollow trees sometimes a strong breeze from some particular point will cause a deep intermittent bellow, which might originate a belief in ghostly bulls. At Rosslara (Fortanemore) Castle near Tulla we have heard the wind from some undetermined point towards the north-west, when sufficiently strong, raise a roar so mighty as to be audible far from the ruin. I traced the noise to a small deep window nearly filled by a slope of earth and stones. The Castle enjoys the fame of being haunted, but I have heard no bull legend. At Rinroe (or Elmhill) Castle near Clonlara, the bull was seen about 1890 by the then owner of the farm on which the ivied tower stands. Having missed several "trams" of hay, the farmer was lying in wait in some bushes in the Castle field, and at last saw a huge black bull come out of the ruin, and throw its tail round a "tram" of hay and draw it into the castle.[16] There is an old lane way at a beautiful spot on the shore of Lough Derg opposite to the "Holy Island" of Iniscaltra with its lofty round tower and clustered churches with their noble setting of lake and mountains. In this old road are two dreaded spots, one haunted by a ghostly black bull with fiery eyes, and the other by a less awe-inspiring object "a ghost like a turkey cock"! Farther north is the scene of a curious variant of the Bishop Hatto legend, with frogs instead of rats and a brutal boy in place of a cruel prelate.[17]

[14] Translated by S. H. O'Grady in *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., pp. 101-265.

[15] So the late Ralph Hugh Westropp and Mrs. Stamer.

[16] The late Hugh Massy Westropp heard this from the farmer.

[17] So Capt. Hibbert.

[P.216]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date) 1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Water Cattle.—I have not found a water-bull legend clearly told in Clare, but cow's horns are seen over the waters of one lake and "something roared" under the waters of another.[18] In 1877 I heard of cattle coming out of some lake near Kilkishen, (perhaps Cullaun, with its enchanted city or palace), but I could not recover the story when searching twenty years later. "*Loch na bó girre* which is called *loch Gréine*" is given[19] as an old name for the large lake of Lough Graney in the Aughty mountains on the north border of Clare. This probably implies that it had a legend like that of Lough bo Girr, near Cahir in County Tipperary, whence an enormous long-horned cow used to issue. 776

Púcas and Horses.—Though the *púca* has influenced very often the place-names of Clare, its legends in the county are dry and vague. One man near Clonlara had the misfortune to become its sport. It took the form of a pony, and, finding the man searching for treasure in a gravel-pit, in which he had dreamed that gold was concealed, bore him away on a long rough ride and dropped him at the spot from which it started, where he was found bruised and insensible next morning.[20] The *púca* also appears as a hideous goat. I was told by a servant, about 1870, of a demon "black puck-goat with fiery eyes" appearing to a poor country woman on a roadside bank in the Cratloe hills.[21] The tale was very blood-curdling, but, doubtless to my relief then but regret now, I put it out of mind, and now forget its details. The *púca* always puts its hoof on the blackberries at Michaelmas, after which they become unfit to eat.[22]

Of spirit horses other than the *púca*, I have heard of one at a deep gravel quarry, near Trough in the same hills. The ghostly presentment of a Limerick gentleman, a Mr. Furnell, appeared one moonlight night on horseback. He rode at full gallop, with 776 763

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[18] I think Lough Breeda, east from Tulla, and Clonlea Lake were intended. I am to blame for not making a note at the time, but was only interested in the legend. My notes only begin in 1878, though embodying earlier matter, and are too often "car notes" from drivers and others and not properly located. Where possible, I re-examined them from 1892 upwards.

[19] In the "Agallamh," *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 126.

[20] So the late Sir Hugh Dillon Massy at Doonass.

[21] So Mrs. O'Shea at Clorane, Limerick.

[22] Cf. similar English belief as regards the devil.

[P. 217]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

776 763 hounds in full cry, and the sound of horns, across the upper field, leaped the fence, and disappeared into the quarry with a crash and groan. Mr. Francis Drew of Drewsborough, who was driving past with a friend, recognised and called to the ghostly rider; when he saw the supposed accident, he ran into the quarry, but could find nothing. Next day he heard of the death of the hunter, but far away from the quarry.[23]

776 Supernatural, but evidently material, were the horses which came out of the caves of Kilcorney in the heart of the Burren,[24] for they left descendants, noted for their high spirits and fierceness, by earthly mares in the valley. A similar tale of sea-horses coming out of Galway Bay was told some thirty-five years since, and we owned a reputed scion of their race, a cob from Connemara on the opposite side of the Bay.

Dogs.—One spectral dog haunts the road between Carrigaholt and Ross in the long peninsula of the Irrus, and is believed to be the spirit of a comparatively recent local celebrity, "Robin of Ross," of whom many tales are told. He was a member of the Keane family, and one version makes his ghost a different dog from the one near Carrigaholt.[25] Another dog accompanies a human ghost on its nightly patrol between the railway bridge and the cemetery at the venerable church and shattered round tower of Dromcliff. The precincts of Ennistymon House were haunted by the spectre of a large black hound, quite harmless.[26] Once very famous, but now nearly forgotten, was the ghostly "Black Dog of Cratloe." Many believed that they had seen the apparition, which used often to accompany the D'Esterre's coach and the mail car. My mother and my brother Ralph Hugh Westropp, who travelled through the great floods of the Shannon on February 1st, 1869, told a very circumstantial tale of the dog.[27]

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[23] So the late Capt. Ralph Westropp, from Mr. Drew.

[24] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 236; cf. Gough, *Camden*, vol. iv., p. 366.

[25] So the MacDonnells and a driver named Russell. "Robin" lived in the early eighteenth century.

[26] So Mrs. Twigge.

[27] My mother in her diary notes,—"Drove home through several floods, the worst at Bunratty. . . . Saw the phantom dog at Cratloe."

[P. 218]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

I was present at its first telling, before they heard from our old servant, Mrs. Julia MacHugh, of the local belief. The tale, I have heard, was fully confirmed by their driver and a guide, a workman of the D'Esterres, who piloted them along a flooded and unfenced reach of the road a little to the east of Bunratty. A large, dark, shadowy dog seemed to run upon the moonlit water, first to one side and then to the other of the carriage, and was more than once lashed at by the driver. It disappeared near where the road ascends from the low marshy "corcasses" along the foot of the Cratloe hills. Julia MacHugh, a woman of wide local knowledge, at once "explained" the apparition and said that the omen was good if the dog ran alongside, but bad if he leaped at the carriage or horses. On one occasion he leaped at the mail car, and soon afterwards its driver was thrown off and killed on the spot. I recently learnt that a ghostly black dog haunts by night the lonely road above the old ruined house of Glenomera. 776

Seals.—The belief that seals are disguised human beings prevailed, I am told, in Clare forty years ago, at least along the Kilkee coast.[28] I never heard it myself from fisherfolk. A little further north, from Connemara up to Mayo, the Kinealys are reputed to be descended from a beautiful seal-woman. The belief is nearly universal, and is attached even to a few of the family in Clare. [825]

Rabbits.—Early this year a clever intelligent man, near Ennis, went with a boy and a ferret to shoot rabbits from a fort. Three ran out and were shot at and missed. The man then called the boy to come at once, and ran off in great excitement and fear, saying that the rabbits were fairies. Some such belief must be widely spread, as Mrs. MacDonnell of Newhall told me that, when a girl, she took up a small and very tame white rabbit in the glen at Edenvale and immediately afterwards found that she had lost a ring. The people who helped in the search, and her father's gamekeeper, were convinced that the rabbit was a fairy and had taken the ring with it.

Birds.—I have read of an enchanted bird which was caught in the cave of Kilcorney and spoke with a human voice.[29] The

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[28] So the late Hugh Massy Westropp.

[29] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 236.

[P. 219]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

●776 ravens and owls connected with the Ross-Lewins, Westropps, and other families as death warnings have already been referred to (p. 190).

X. *Spectral Lands and Cities.*

773 Clare formed a part of the outmost fringe of the ancient world, and its people were deeply impressed with the mysteries and wonders of the Outer Ocean. The voyage of Maelduin tells of the son of a Clare man sailing out into "the great endless deep" and finding isles of surpassing beauty and wonder, and the "Hui Corra" in deep repentance sailed towards the setting sun from the creek at the northern bound of Clare "to meet the Lord on the sea."[30] [792] St. Brendan, eager to seek out new islands, went for advice to St. Enda, a saint closely connected with Clare, (where Killeany bears his name), and its appanage, Aran. In the bay to the north of Clare William Ires, a native of Galway, became accustomed to the ocean which he crossed with Columbus, and it may be that his tales of Hy Brasil, of St. Brendan's Isle, and of the "thrice fifty distant Isles in the ocean to the west of us. Larger than Erin, twice is each of them, or thrice,"[31] encouraged the frightened sailors of the great Admiral to persevere a little longer.

Hy Brasil,[32] the Isle of the Blessed, is possibly a legacy from ancient paganism, which placed its Tirnan-oge, The Land of Youth, in the waves "on the west side down from Aran, where goes the sun to its couch."[33] The desire for the ageless, deathless land prevailed all up the western coast, and was strong in Kilkee in 1868-78, and perhaps even still. I myself saw the mirage several times in 1872 giving the perfect image of a shadowy island with wooded hills and tall towers springing into sight for a moment as the sun sank below the horizon. I have also heard from Kilkee fishermen legends, like that embodied in the verses of Gerald

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[30] "Voyage of the Hui Corra," *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiv. (1893), p. 37; *Voyage of Bran*, (ed. Kuno Meyer), vol. i., p. 12; "Voyage of Maelduin," *Revue Celtique*, vol. ix. (1888), p. 45.

[31] *Voyage of Bran*, vol. i., p. 14.

[32] It is marked on a series of ancient maps from the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth centuries.

[33] *Giolla an fhiugha*, (Irish Texts Society, vol. i.), p. 21.

[P.220]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

773 Another sunken island off Loop Head is named by the Rev. John Graham and the Halls,[38] and called Kilstiffin or Kilstapheen. I heard no such tradition in Moyarta, but O'Curry alludes to it without contradiction, although he was a native and son of a veritable repertory of the local legends of the Irrus.[39] The towers and other edifices were visible at times under the waves, and its [821] inhabitants sometimes raised destructive storms over its site when all around was calm.

The large lake of Cullaun (Cullaunyheeda) near Tulla is reputed to cover a palace or a city. Tradition said that a chief, Sioda MacNamara, (probably the restorer of the beautiful "Abbey" of Quin in 1402), was carried into the depths by a ● [776] "water horse" which he had caught and trained. The rock off which his treacherous steed leaped was shown before 1870, and the chief was believed to be sleeping till "the last weird battle in the west," doomed to win Ireland her liberty and a glorious place amongst the nations. It seems likely that it was from the same lake that magic cattle issued, as I heard about Kilkishen, near it, in 1877. A local bard, Michael Hogan, refers to the lake in one of his poems,[40] but how far he embodies local legend I am unable to say. His light-hearted, if lawless, hero is surprised on coming to "Cullaun's fairy waters" to see a noble park instead of a lake. He hits his cow in surprise, and she leaps the fence. Following her he reaches the palace of an ancient chief, who entertains him and dismisses him with his marvellously fattened cow. He finds at the fair that he has been absent for a year under the waters of the lake.

"Thro' wild Cullane's embowering shades—
Beneath the silver starlight, sleeping,
He pass'd—the trees, with silent heads,
Upon his darken'd path hung weeping.

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following other romances, and contradicting the genuine legends in several particulars.

[38] *Mason's Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 490, collected by Rev. J. Graham from the Behanes, Landers, Contis, and Coonerties of Kilrush and Carrigaholt; Mr. and Mrs. S. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery etc.*, vol. ii., p. 436.

[39] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. ii.

[40] *Lays and Legends of Thomond*, pp. 13, 20.

[P 222]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

important subject somewhat bald. The pagan Irish, of course, 823
reverenced wells, and the famous "King of the Waters" in Mayo
was connected with St. Patrick by early biographers.[9] With the
usual wise tactfulness of the ancient Irish missionaries all that was [797]
harmless was adopted into the new religion, and the wells lost
none of their old observances and honour. The dedications of 776
the Clare wells form a most valuable record, for, even when the
founder of the church was forgotten, or a new patron invoked, the 823
well usually kept the name of the ancient local saint. Unfor- 778
tunately since about 1850 names of wells have been locally
forgotten, and a re-dedication, often to St. Joseph, is common.
Strange to say, the noteworthy saints Enda and Luchtighern are
forgotten at the wells at their churches. The early mediæval
life of St. Senan, (Colgan, *Vita S.S.*, March), says that, when that
saint was born at Magh Lacha, Moylough, there was no water at
hand to baptize him,—a rare thing in County Clare,—so he told
his mother to pull up three rushes, and a spring welled out. The
tale was still told in 1816.[10] The life of St. Mochulleus (Mochuille
or Mochulla), about 1141 tells us how that early seventh-century
saint struck a rock near a lake to the north of Tulla and three streams
broke out. The well dedicated to him to the east of Loch Graney
is evidently intended, and *two* streams still flow from it down the
hillside. Some have supposed the wells of Tobereendowny, ("well
of the King of the Sabbath," or, as suggested by Prof. Macalister
and others, "of the world"),—were dedicated to a pre-Christian
deity. Tobereevul is dedicated to Aibhill.[11] The flooded dolmen,
Tobergrania, is named from Finn's fugitive spouse, "Granny's
bed" occurring also as a dolmen name in Clare. Among
Christian dedications we have Tobercruhnorindowan (of "the
creator of the world") at Killard, Tober Isa (of "Jesus"), and
Tobernacrohynaeve (*i.e.* Tobar-na-croiche-naoimh, of "the Holy
Cross"). To the Virgin are dedicated wells at Drimelihy-
Westby, Kilmacduan, and Killadysert. Of non-local saints,—
usually, it is probable, late dedications,—we find St. John has

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[9] *E.g.*, in the *Tripartite Life*, ed. W. Stokes, among the early "annotations" of Tirechan.

[10] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., under Kilrush Parish.

[11] Cf. vol. xxi., p. 186.

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14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

776 the wells of Killone and Tromra, St. Michael wells at Kilbrecan,
778 Cappagh (Bunratty) and the Kilmihils, St. Augustine at Kilshanny and Gallynagry, St. Bartholomew at Toberpartholaun in Rath
823 (Inchiquin), and St. Martin at Moyarta, Ballynecally, and Lemaneagh. All the dedications to St. Joseph are modern. St. Patrick did not enter Clare, but has wells at Correen (Kilnaboy), Clooney (Bunratty Barony), and Rossalia. The following list of wells dedicated to local saints may be useful for reference. *Brecan* (c. 480) has wells at Noughaval near Clare Castle (Kilbrecan), Doora, and Clooney (Bunratty); *Brendan* (date doubtful), at Kilmoon and Farighy (Moyarta); *Brigid*, (probably the Abbess of Feenish Island, c. 550), Kiltanon, Cappafeeaun, Finnor, and Coney Island; *Caimin* (d. 653), Iniscaltra and Moynoe; *Caritan* (c. 550), Kilcredaun in Kilballyowen, Kilcredaun near O'Brien's Bridge, and Kilcredaunadober near Bunratty; *Carrol* (doubtful), Kilcarrol, where a wooden image of him existed in 1816; *Colan* of Tomgraney (d. 552), to the west of that village; *Colman mac Duach* of Kilmacduach (c. 630), Kinallia, Oughtmāma (where "the three Colmans" probably originate in a confusion of texts), Teernea, Lough George, and Crusheen: *Columba* of Iona (d. 597), Crumlin and Glen Columbcille; *Cornan* (unknown), Kilcornan and Tobercornan in Gleninagh; *Croine* (unknown), Kilcrony and Liscrona in Moyarta, *Cronan* (probably of Tomgraney, c. 505), Inchicronan, Termoncronan, Killokennedy, and Corrakyle; *Dioma*, Kildimo; *Enda* (c. 480), Killeany; *Fachtnan* (doubtful), Kilfenora; *Flannan* (c. 680), Killaloe; *Imer* (unknown), Killimer; *Inghean Baoith* (c. 630), Kilnaboy, Commons, Glenseeade, Inakerstown, Killavella, Dulick (Templemaley), Kiltacky, Kilshanny, Aglish, Moy-Ibrickan, Magowna, Ballycoree, Shalee (two), Cullaun, Castletown (Spansil Hill), Dromumna, and Quin; *Kirin* (not Kieran), Kilkierin (locally Kilkereen); *Lachtin*, Kilnamona, Kilfarboy, and Stacpoole Bridge near Miltown Malbay; *Lonan* (c. 580), Killaspuglonane and Derrynavahagh (Kilmoon); *Luchtighern* (c. 550), Tomfinlough and, probably, Moy Ibrickan; *Maccreehy* (c. 580), Kilmacreehy, Kilmanaheen, and Inagh; *Mainchin* (perhaps "St. Munchin," patron of Limerick), Kilmanaheen; *Mochonna* (unknown), Feakle and Moynoe; *Mochulla* (c. 620), Tulla, Templemoculla (Clonlara), Lough Graney, Lough

[P. 231]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Breeda, Miltown, Kilgorey, Fortanne, Broadford, Trough, Ralahine, Cragg, Lahardan, and Cappavilla, with perhaps, (if not of St. Molocus, c. 550), Moylough, Scattery, and Carrigaholt; *Molua* (c. 620), Killaloe; *Onchu*, Killonaghan; *Sanctan*, Dromline; *Screbann*, Clondegad and Kilmaley; *Senan* (d. 552), Iniscatha, Moylough, Iniscaeragh (Mutton Island), Kilclogher, Carrow (Kilmaduan), Erribul (Kilfiddan), Kilshanny, Killaneena, Cooraclare, Kilcredaun, and Drim (Quin); *Tola* (c. 635), Dysert O'Dea and Kiltola; and *Voydan* or *Braighdean* (unknown), Kilvoydan, Corofin, and Kilraughtis. 776 778 823

Healing Powers.—The *Ordnance Survey Letters*[12] mention the following:—Gleninagh well, which has a fifteenth-century well-house or "turry," cured sore eyes; Tober Cholmain, above Oughtmāma churches, sufferers from "the pearl," the films falling off the eyes at the third washing; St. Maccreehy's well, near Liscannor, eye troubles, which were also cured by St. Inghean Baoith's well near Kilshanny (even then nearly deserted), Tobermoghna near Clooney (Corcomroe), St. Senan's well on the cliffs south-west from Kilkee, Kilcrony well near Carrigaholt, Tobercuan in Kiltrellig near Loop Head, Tobershenan in Moyfadda, the Virgin's well at Templemaley, and Tober Isa at Corlack Glebe (Bunratty). Tobernatasha, ("well of the relic" or, as some say, "spectre"), in Kilmaley was shaped like a coffin, and delicate children used to be laid on their backs in it.[13] The black mud which gave its name to Toberduff cured sore eyes and swelled limbs. So did Senan's well at Kilkee; horrible to tell, the devotees,—down to 1875, at least, when a washing-tank was made outside the well-house,—used to wash in this, the only supply of drinking-water for the then fashionable watering-place. Toberlachtin at Kilnemona cured several diseases, its "day" being March 19th. Eyes were also healed by the well south from Newmarket-on-Fergus, and by the wetted moss of St. Mochulla's well near Tulla (the moss being put back to complete the cure). The latter well is said to have avenged itself, about 1780, on its landlord, who had dug away part of its enclosure, by rendering 757 778 823 [755]

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[12] Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Mss. 14B 23. 24. (Co. Clare), vols. i. and ii.

[13] *Ordnance Survey Letters*, (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 183.

[P 232]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The names Thomas, James, and Patt. Cusack, and carvings of the round tower, Crucifixion, an angel, and a figure with a chalice, also appeared, as well as St. Senan with a crozier driving out a beast with a serrated back, belly, and tail, and the inscription "St. Synon and the Angel casting the amphibious beast out of the blessed Island." I could not find the stone after 1878. The devotees in 1816 took their rounds about the holy well annually on their bare knees, and it was the practice of those who could not conveniently attend to hire for a small payment some poor person to act as their substitute. The pattern was sometimes held on Easter Monday, and, as it was degenerating into drunkenness, the Roman Catholic Dean of Killaloe endeavoured to stop it.[6] His curate also persuaded several women to enter St. Senan's church, but their families were soon after evicted and left the Island, so that the fame of the saint's legendary misogyny was established more firmly than ever. But in 1878, when I first visited the Island, women entered the church without protest.

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At Killone the great patterns have been long since suppressed,[7] and I could learn nothing about the actual rites. "Rounds" are still performed at other times, being frequently vowed in sickness or for a sick relative. The rite consists in going on the bare knees, with bare head, sunwise round the green tongue of land from the altar between the crags and the lake. This being done, prayers are offered at the altar itself. Some pilgrims also wash their heads, feet, and hands in the bathing tank. The details vary according to the vow, and count is kept of the rounds and prayers by the rounded stones on the altar.[8] None of the observances seem to extend to the neighbouring abbey. The Pilgrim's Road is still visible, running north from the well far towards Ennis. The altar was last repaired by Anthony Roche, an Ennis merchant, in 1731.

The patterns on Iniscaltra, in Lough Derg, have long been nearly forgotten. In 1877 an old boatman told me that he had heard from old people of the flotillas of boats from every side of the great lake, the villages of tents, and the crowds of beggars,

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[6] Mason's *Parochial Survey*, vol. ii., p. 459, under Kilrush parish.

[7] The summer pattern on St. John's Day still attracts a fair number of devotees, but seems to have no very exceptional feature.

[8] Cf. *ante*, p. 50, and Plate III.

[P 236]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions.*

773 825 I have had occasion to search, in Irish works of pre-Tudor date, for sidelights on the early fauna of Ireland, and the results, so far, are meagre. There is constant reference to dogs, cattle, horses, deer, and wolves, but rarely do any but the hound put on any definite shape. Even the bull plays little more part in the *Tain bo Cualgne* than Briseis does in the *Iliad*, and generally the animal is a mere appendage to an incident.

[103] *Cattle.*—Place-names give us little information save as to the custom of driving the animals up to the hills in the summer time, Mount Callan being girt by a series of "Boolies" (*i.e.* milking places),[30] usually qualified by some phrase such as "of the sun" or "of the sea-gulls." The cow was the practical unit of value in olden times, three cows being worth a woman-slave, and a single one the "ounce," which seems to have been an imaginary standard. Legendary cows, such as the Glasgeivnagh and Glas gamhnach, play a large part in the traditions, the hoofmarks of the latter pitting all the rocks of eastern Burren and its borders. Another supernatural cow predominates in the extreme west of the barony, near Crumlin. The Seven Streams of Teeskagh were said to originate from the exuberant milk of a "Glas." Supernatural bulls and water cattle have already been dealt with.[31]

778 825 233 823 [776] The most remarkable customs relating to cattle centre round Lough Fergus. Along its north shore stand twelve cairns in an irregular line. On the eighth from the east end are two natural stones resembling a small chair and a cross, named after St. Fergus, (who appears in none of the calendars and is perhaps a river-spirit). Along with these are put a china image, bits of iron,

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[30] Boulavaun (white milking ground), Boulinrudda (red place), Boolinduff (black), Boolynamiscaun (of the dish), and Boolynagreana (sunny) at Callan; Booltiagh, Boolybrien, Boolynagleeragh (of the clergy), Boolyknockaun, Boolynaaska (of the eels), and Cloonbooley in Kilmaley; Boultiaghdine in Kilmaboy, (but the inhabitants say that Booltiagh means "mired by cattle" not "milking place"); Boolynamwella (of sea-gulls) in Kilmihil; Booltydoolan in Killadysert; and Booleevin (pleasant) in Kilkeedy. In east Clare the name is rare, Boolynacaush (of the Easter sports), in Slieve Bernagh, being the only one known to me.

[31] Vol. xxi., pp. 480-1.

[P 241]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued*).

XVIII. *Animal and Plant Superstitions* (*continued*).

Horse.—I have found no folklore relating to horses except that already given regarding supernatural animals.[1] I have since 825 recalled a legend of a dangerous spectral horse, probably a *púca*, 776 haunting the bridge over the Blackwater, between Limerick and Clonlara, and the tree-darkened road towards the latter place,—a terror by night to passengers till about twenty years ago. There was also the bodiless head of a spectral horse which used to float beside cars on a road near Clooney, of which I heard about 1876, but now forget the details. The riding of horses by fairies was not unknown.

Dog, Fox, and Hare.—Besides the supernatural dogs already noted,[2] and the "Red Dog" (or Fox?), near Cragmoher, at Drehidnavaddaroe Bridge, there is little to tell. Finn's famous hound Bran was drowned at Tirmicbrain lake, and a ghastly dog broke the bones in some graveyard, (perhaps Doora or Clooney), [777] before 1876.[3] It is unlucky to meet a fox, a red-haired woman, or a hare "first thing" in the morning. The hare is said to eat human flesh,—probably from being often "started" in graveyards. I have been told by several Clare people of witches turning into [791] hares, but the alleged incident was never located in the county.

Seal.—A very vague belief prevails on the coast that seals are

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[1] Vol. xxi., pp. 481-2.

[2] Vol. xxi., pp. 482-3.

[3] As in most of my recollections of folk-tales heard before 1876, the details are forgotten.

[p. 245]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

825
776 enchanted human beings.[4] It gets more definite above Galway Bay, where the Kinealeys are of reputed seal descent. Some such belief may underlie the name Cumarra (or sea-hound) in the MacNamara family. I found more difficulty in getting fisher beliefs in recent years than in getting folklore from the country people. Much of what I heard in 1906 was probably of tourist origin, and, like the *merrow* at Killard,[5] not to be trusted as genuine belief.

Otter.—Beyond vague belief in an enormous "durracow"[6] (the king of the otters), which I heard of as a child on the Shannon Bank about some unnamed lake in east Clare, I am not aware of any folklore about this creature in the county. There was said to be a "remarkable" otter at Glenomera.

Cat.—The cat was much regarded by the early Irish, and holds honourable place in their ancient code of laws. It even appears in the illuminations of the *Book of Kells*. Numerous places in Clare bear its name, but local belief tends to consider the "cat" in these names as a weird monster. The "Cata" and "Faracat" of legend[7] were probably "dragons." The cat has supernatural [763 knowledge. If a cat looks fixedly at a person without apparent 787] reason it forebodes sickness or death, but if it does so to an unmarried person, after making its toilet, it foretells marriage.

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[4] So in Aed Baclamp from the *Book of Lismore*, (*Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 72), St. Brendan changes 50 seals into horses, which carry into the sea their riders, who, on reaching it, are, like their steeds, changed into seals.

[114] [5] Vol. xxi., p. 342. Mrs. Dorothea Townshend of Oxford calls my attention to the probability that this story was made up by Dr. Keightley (v. App. to his *Fairy Mythology*). In my original Ms. I expressed great doubt as to this story, having found no equivalent to it near Dunbeg or Kilkee, but this was unfortunately omitted in publication. The Miltown mermaid was probably one of the white seals occasionally seen on the coast.

[6] *I.e. Dobharchu*, water-hound. The Irish called the wolf *fael-chu* (wild hound) and *cu allaid*, and the marten *crann chu* (branch hound). The more common name for the wolf in Clare is *breagh*, as in Breaghva and Breffy, the name of several townlands. The other wolf name *Mac Tire* (son of the country), is attached to Knockaunvicteera hill near Lisdoonvarna (where it refers to the animal), and to Cahermactire, a fort near Inchiquin Hill; at the latter place it may refer to a person, as the name Mac Tire is found in various annals.

[7] Vol. xxi., pp. 477-9.

[P. 246]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The wild cat is believed to have a spike or hook at the end of its tail which it can stick into a pursuer, but I found no such fine legend in Clare on this point as I did near Kenry in Limerick, where the cats pursued, and anchored themselves on, a farmer and his dog, after chasing them from Clorane to Old Kildimo! 825 776

Elk.—The Irish elk is known among the turf cutters of Clooney and Tulla as the "Fiaghmore" (so pronounced, but really *fiadh mor*, big deer),—"it might be one of the deer Finn hunted." Its numerous remains have given to one townland the name "Fiaghmore, Fiah,"[8] in 1655. The "Agallamh"[9] has an interesting allusion. Diarmaid kills a huge deer, and its antler, when resting on his foot, reaches above his head, despite his great height. Caoilte produces this horn from a lake to convince St. Patrick of the truth of his stories of the heroes.

Badger, Squirrel, and Marten.—It is asserted that there are two kinds of badgers,—the "dog-badger," which eats carrion and digs into graves, and the "pig-badger," which is a strict vegetarian and is eatable. [262] In the *Boroma* tract from the *Book of Leinster*,[10] and the "Agallamh," badger bacon and squirrels are mentioned as fit to set before a king or hero. It is doubtful whether the *togmal*, (kept as a pet by Queen Maeve and killed on her shoulder by Cuchullin's slingstone), was a squirrel or a bird, but squirrel skins, along with marten skins, formed a considerable export from Ireland at least from 1230 to 1580, and in 1686 Roderic O'Flaherty names the squirrel amongst the animals of Connaught.[11] The true marten was until recently common in east Clare, and, like the supposed "marten-cat" (a large red domestic cat that has gone wild), was reputed uncanny in my boyhood. I have seen martens at play in the Clare woods in 1869, and had one stuffed in 1876, but they seem now to be extinct.

Hybrids.—Besides the "dog-badger," there were said to be uneatable hybrids of the cat and the rabbit, and of the rook and [262]

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[8] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxiv., p. 94.

[9] *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., p. 176. Antlers over six feet long have been found in Clare, and there is a fine single antler 6 ft. 2 in. long at Violet Hill, Broadford.

[10] *Revue Celtique*, vol. xiii., p. 47.

[11] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xl., p. 245.

[p. 247]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date) 1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

825 the domestic hen. The "soft egg laid by the cock" was looked on
776 with suspicion, and so was the egg of the bat, which was even
[262] unlucky to find, and could be used for malignant charms.

Stoat.—In Clare the stoat is always called "weazel." A corruption of the strange Irish name *Feasóg* (the little beard) is as often used, even by English speakers, as the *whishshoge* or *whushshoge*. The creature was equally disliked and respected. It is wished "Good morning, ma'am," by some, and generally saluted by raising the hat on meeting; but others spit and cross themselves. It is regarded as peevish and persistent; "as cross as a bag of weazels" is a proverb in east Clare, while Finn is compared to a weazel in the pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne. I have heard many stories about its revengefulness "when its nest is killed," and of one of its persistent attempts to get at a corpse in a house in south-east Clare, rather, it was thought, for magical purposes than from hunger. Old belief ascribed to the animal the power of poisoning. At Carnelly a labourer told that when cutting a meadow near the "Druids' Altar"[12] he killed a young weazel. Soon afterwards his wife brought him his dinner and a can of sour milk. While they talked, she cried out that a weazel was spitting into the can, but the man laughed and drank the milk. Soon afterwards he got violent gripes, and gave himself up for lost. The doctor had great difficulty in persuading him to try any remedy, and his wife was almost scandalized by his recovery. A similar tale was told at my old home, Attyflin, in which young weazels were not killed but put on a wisp of grass safely in a bush. The parents were seen spitting into the milk, but, on finding the young ones safe, they returned and upset the can.[13] So "even the weazel has justice." Both stories probably originated in the animal's love for milk.

Rat.—A Clare woman told me that a man whose love was
[775] rejected by a girl living in Limerick city died, and his soul went into a rat and used to bite her throat until she had to emigrate.[14] The rat tried to follow her and was drowned, and so the persecution ended. A curious "parliament of rats" was held near Durra in

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[12] Mrs. O'Callaghan of Maryfort and others.

[13] Late Hugh Massy Westropp.

[14] Mrs. M. MacCormick.

[P.248]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Upper Bunratty, the fields being covered with them, but, when it 825 broke up, the "troops" dispersed, and no bands were seen at any distance from the rendezvous. A rat was "heard talking with the 776 Devil" in the grave of an unpopular person before 1875, but how the holders of this curious conversation were identified was never stated. I have met a belief in speaking rats in eastern Clare and among fishermen at Kilkee.

Hedgehog.—This animal is reputed to steal apples and suck cows and eggs, so that it is persecuted and called *grainoge* (little ugly thing).

Birds.—A pair of ravens roosted in a top window of the round tower of Iniscatha (Scattery) early in the last century. The birds were said to escort their young, when fully fledged, across the Shannon to Carrigfoile Castle in Kerry, and not to let them return [777] to the island.[15] Scaldcrows (roystons) are considered unlucky, and much feared. The old Irish regarded them as incarnations of the war-goddess Bodbh.[16] Birds as omens have already been noted.[17] The bat is looked on as a sort of bird, and it is ominous of death for it to fly at one's face. The entry of a robin into a house is a [763] death omen near Tulla, but elsewhere a sign of good fortune. Although swans are so plentiful that I have often seen more than forty together in Inchiquin and other lakes, the only folklore associated with them seems to be a tale of swan-maidens at Inchiquin. The hunting of the wren has been described in Section XIV.[18]

Fishes.—It was regarded as a custom among the fishermen of 226 Kilrush and Scattery that no one should go fishing for three days after the arrival of the herring shoals, but, when the first day 825 dawned, a crowd of boats was always discovered, and much quarrelling resulted.[19] As the shoals arrived, a mass used to be celebrated on the shore at Kilmurry, Ibrickan, to secure good

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[15] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii., p. 546.

[16] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. x.; *Revue Celtique*, vol. i.; Joyce, *Social History of Ireland*, vol. i., p. 267.

[17] Vol. xxi., p. 190.

[18] *Ante*, pp. 206-7, and Plate IX.

[19] Hely Dutton, *Statistical Survey of the County of Clare* (1808), pp. 228, 259.

[P. 249]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

133 773 823

the marks on the fretted rocks are attributed to the grey cow of Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha). It is a very lonely and impressive spot. Ascending at the beautiful waterfall of the Seven Streams in Teeskagh, (a curtain of silver network over a cliff, sheeted with long moss and ferns, with ledges white with anemones, in spring, and fields blue with gentians), the great triple stone fort of Cahercommaun is seen on the edge of the northern cliff, and the way passes another early enclosure, with ruins of huts, called Cahernaglasha, where the *Glas* cow was stabled and her seven keepers lived. The highest point of Slievenaglasha,—rising 700 feet above the sea, which is visible far to the west,—has fourteen cairns and overlooks a long shallow valley, with strange brown patches here and there and another strong ring wall over a little cave. The patches are the *labbas* or beds of the *Glas* and her calf, the waterfall sprang from the abundant milk of the cow, and the fort is Mohernagartan ("the smith's fort"), the residence of Lon the Smith. The footprints of the wonderful animal and of Lon's seven sons are visible on every crag, and the cave with strange cinder-like débris is the reputed forge of the "dark brown Luno" of (Macpherson's) Ossian.[4]

823 773

At Ballynahown in Corcomroe, overlooked by the bold peel tower of Ballinalacken, are traces of the *Heanbo* (single cow), which differs from the *Glas* and gives its name to the Labbanaheanbo, a cave high up in the face of a magnificent cliff. In this bed the Heanbo will support the Leinster man who will win the freedom of Ireland in the last great battle. The cave is at the junction of three townlands, but is in none of them.[5]

776● 823

On Scattery Island were two stones (still, I think, visible), one called Glun Senain because marked by the knee (*glun*) of St. Senan, and the other the stone on which St. Cannara[6] floated from Kilconry to the holy isle of the woman-fearing saint.

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[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100. I gave the legend in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxv., p. 227, and it is still told in the locality.

[5] From Messrs. Kelleher and Hilary of Oughtdarra, to whose kindness and local knowledge I am much indebted. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] Vol. xxii., p. 332, n. 2.

[P. 254]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

● 776 823 Another knee-stone of St. Senan was beside the creek of Poulanishery on the opposite shore to Scattery. Between Dysert O'Dea and Rath Blamaic a rock with two basins bore the marks of St. Manawla's knees when she carried off the round tower of Rath.[7] St. Columba's thumb and finger marks are shown on a limestone boulder in the road fence near the lane to his entrenched church in Glen Columbcille. The bosses on the "plague stone" at Tomfinlough church were the two plague swellings torn from a woman's head and thrown against the stone by St. Luchtighern.

773 823 Not only the saints, but also Finn MacCumhail and his warriors have left marks on the rocks of Clare. A huge rock named Cloughmornia or Cloughlea, near Ballysheen and not far from Sixmilebridge, has in its sides long straight gashes where Finn and his band tried (or sharpened) their swords.[8] Finn's fingerprints are visible on a rock which was brought to Cullaun House near Quin early in the last century by the facetious Tom Steele from Birr in King's County, where it was seen by Thomas Dineley about 1680. The stone was called "the Navel of Ireland,"[9] and the V-marks are now regarded as the footprints of the cock that crowed at St. Peter's denial.

Hughey's Rock, a great boulder on the brow of the ridge between Edenvale and Rockmount near Ennis, bears the finger-marks of Hughey, a giant who threw it at another giant from Mount Callan.[10]

Caves.—I have heard at Newhall of a cave "between Ennis and Lisdoonvarna" in which runs an underground river that

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[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 50. A similar legend occurs in the *Book of Lecan.*

[8] *The Battle of Magh Leana*, p. 30 (notes). The legend was still surviving at Ballysheen in 1899.

[9] *The Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Society*, vol. viii. (1864), p. 360. The cock legend is often represented on tombstones etc., and appears at Ennis Abbey (1460). In a version gathered by me in eastern Limerick, the cock says,—"I'm only a cock, and you're an apostle; but I'm the better gentleman any day!" In *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick*, p. 415, the Angel Victor in the form of a bird leaves footmarks on a stone.

[10] So told me by Shaneen (Little John) O'Halloran at Edenvale in 1869 and later.

[P.255]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*concluded*).

XX. *Earthworks and Buildings.*

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823
776

Fairy forts and mounds have been dealt with in Section iv., haunted houses in Section viii., and foundation sacrifices in Section xi.

Forts.—The ring walls and mounds in County Clare are probably residential, or, more rarely, sepulchral, but certainly not military. They consist of one or more walls (or banks), usually slightly oval, and the earthworks have fosses and traces of stone facing. They are named *dun*, *lis*, *rath*, and even *caher* (*cathair*), but the last name is usually reserved for the dry stone ring walls. *Ooan* (*uamh*) is used both for forts and for artificial caves in them, and also, for a fort-souterain, in 1317 in the *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* (History of the Wars of the O'Briens and de Clares). The country people have no limited views as to the makers of the 2400 forts in Clare. Croaghateeaun near Ballinalacken is attributed to the ancient deities, the Danánn, and one should cross oneself in entering its garth.[1] Mohernagartan and Mohernaglasha were made by the smith god Lon,—the latter for the grey "cloud and rain cow," the Glas. Oisin the poet lived in Caherussheen near Corofin, and the great stone fort on Turlough Hill probably belonged to the "Irish Militia" (Finn's warriors). Chonan, one of Finn's men, dwelt in the now levelled fort on Keentlae (*ceann tsleibh*) on Inchiquin Hill.[2] Three contemporaries, Crochaun (lumped hill), Dahlin, and Sall (the brine), made the forts bearing their names at Loop Head, and one at Cahernaheanmná near them for their sister the beloved of the hero Dermot O'Duine.[3] Oircheannaigh "of the golden cap" made the vast triple Moghane for his "fighting ring."[4] A giant dwelt in the promontory fort of Doonaunmore at Ballinahown who lost his magic staff and was

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[1] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 345.

[2] "*Feis tighe chonain.*"

[3] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxviii., p. 351.

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 281; *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. xxvii., pp. 218 *et seq.*

[p.260]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date) 1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

slain.[5] Another Fhir mór (or huge man) was hunted from 172
Cahermurphy stone fort to Kiltumper, where he was slain and 823
buried.[6] Caherdooneerish was in the tenth century reputed to 776 ●
have been made by Irgus, a Firbolg, at the beginning of our era; it
was wrongly attributed by scholars to Fergus, son of Roigh, but
the peasantry never abandoned the name of the brother of
Aenghus of Dun Aengusa in Aran.

Unlike some old schools of antiquaries, the people did not 823
overlook the later origin of some forts, for they attributed the
Grianan and Bealboruma to King Brian Boru (*c.* 1000), the 173
former to defend his horse-paddock (*parc an each*) on the shoulder
of Craglea. The fort of Lisnagry, in the heart of the hills near
Broadford, was reputed to be the hiding-place of the great king's
cattle from the Danes. King Croohoore (Conor) na Siudaine
O'Brien (slain 1267) was said to have built Dunconor, the great
stone fort in Inishere Aran which MacLiag's poem (*c.* 1000)
attributes to Conchraid the Firbolg. The same king, we may
note, executed the latest earthworks of a fort recorded in Clare
history, at Clonroad, completing the royal *rath* commenced by
his father and left unfinished in 1241. Some rebuilding of Dun
Conor may quite conceivably have been undertaken in his reign.

To the fairy forts previously mentioned should be added 823
Lissateeaun, near Lisdoonvarna. The people of Tulla had an 778
observance by which the instigator of the destruction of a fort
assumed the blame and freed the workman.

Churches.—The church of Clonlea once stood at the opposite 346
side of the lake, near St. Senan's well in Killaneena, whence one
night it travelled down the old lane that runs into the lake, passed 773
under the water, and reached its present site. King Conor na
Siudaine built Corcomroe Abbey, and, as soon as his five skilled
masons had completed the beautiful chancel and chapels, he put
them to death lest they should build a rival masterpiece elsewhere.
This legend is now being transferred through modern guide-books,
the careless compilation of which is a great source of corruption of
our legends, to Donald O'Brien, the actual, but not traditional,

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[5] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 205.

[P 261]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

346 founder of the building, and is held to explain the rude and
inferior work of parts of it. Quin "Abbey" was built by the
773 famous Master Mason Gobbán Saor, who twisted the spiral
pillars of its beautiful cloister with his own hands. The builder
of the south transept (1433) fell from its gable, and was killed
where a tombstone with the scribed figure of an axe marks his
grave. The north-west corner of Carran church overhangs, and is
destined to fall on the wisest man that shall pass below it.

344 *Castles.*—A belief similar to that about Carran church was
attached to Ballymulcassel or Mountcashel castle. It is a peel
773 tower, built by King Conor na Srona, about 1460, on a steep little
knoll of rock beside the road from Sixmilebridge to Kilkishen. It
was to fall on the handsomest person, and gossip told of a very
ugly man who always took a longer road to avoid passing it. The
same legend and gossip was attached to Newcastle peel tower,
near Limerick and not far from the border of Clare. A wizard
who lived in Shalee castle was so pestered by his wife that he
flew away with half the tower, which remains as Glen castle near
Ennistymon station. A guest praised Dysert castle to its owner,
344 O'Dea, and wished that it were full of gold. "I'd rather have it
full of O'Hiumhairs," replied O'Dea,[7] the family so complimented
173 being a small but warlike clan, of which one member fought in
the wars of 1313-8 and is reported to have slain Richard de Clare
at Dysert in 1318. I heard in 1869 that the castles near Doonass
were built by seven brothers, and that six came to an untimely
end at the hands of the seventh, but the legend seems now
forgotten at Clonlara.

346 *Round Towers.*—The peasants seem never to have adopted the
various druidic, Cuthite, phallic, and other theories of 1770
● 776 onwards from the so-called "educated classes." To them, as to
173 our earlier writers, the towers are steeples built by saints. John
Lloyd, in 1780,[8] calls that of Scattery "the loftiest old Steeple
in the Kingdom." Michael O'Brannan, in 1794,[9] tells how St.

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[7] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 157. The tale closely resembles a legend of St. Caimin of Iniscaltra and Guaire Aidhne at Iniscaltra, Lough Derg.

[8] *A Short Tour etc.*, p. 21.

[9] Poem on Shannon, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. ii., pp. 15-8.

[P. 262]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

Senan "built seven churches and a beautiful high belfry" there, and 346
how "St. Caimin, a vigorous chieftain, erected seven churches 776
and a high belfry" on Lough Derg. Legend told that St. Senan,
while building his tower, was interrupted by a woman, and left it 173
unfinished.[10] St. Blawfugh (Blathmac) built two towers at Rathblamac, one of which was stolen and brought to Dysert O'Dea by St. Manawla. Of the bells of Dromcliff and Kilnaboy towers I have already told.[11] Kilnaboy tower was broken down by "the bombardment of Cromwell." The round tower at Tomgraney was faintly remembered, in Petrie's time, as like that on Iniscaltra, but it has long since been forgotten.

Crosses and monuments.—I have already mentioned the cross 778
of Dysert O'Dea,[12] which was unusual in having portions of its
carvings on separate pieces of stone, some of which are lost. 173
The cross fell twice, and was re-erected by Conor Crone O'Dea 763
in 1683 and by Col. Synge of Mount Callan in 1872; each benefactor died in the year following his restoration of the cross. The breaking off or fall of any portion of the monument of Sir Donal O'Brien, the first of the baronets of Dromoland, in Kilnasoolagh church, is fatal to his descendants, and so is any attempt to clean or repair it, tradition alleging that one of the O'Briens always dies in either case.[13] My own family believed that, if the family vault were opened, it had soon to be opened twice again to receive new occupants.

Underground passages.—One is said to lead from Cahercrochaun 173
to Dundahlin on Loop Head, and another from the great
promontory fort of Dundoillroe eastwards, where a brown track, 773
probably an old road, still remains. A third ran through Barna- 823
goskaigh to the Tuamnagoskaigh in Ballynahown, near Lisdoonvarna, where there is a roofed cleft of some length. A fourth went from Bealboruma fort under the Shannon; through it the angry Brian Boru sent soldiers to waylay and kill his slandered

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 18. The same tale is told of St. Declan and the beautiful perfect round tower of Ardmore, County Waterford.

[11] Vol. xxii., p. 336; *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 144.

[12] Vol. xxii., pp. 57, 456.

[13] The fall of an angel not long before the death of the late Lord Inchiquin greatly strengthened the belief.

[P. 263]

764 placed on the new coffin. Where burials take place at short
intervals the results are best left untold, but such cases are rare.
A consequence of this fearful overcrowding is that no old graveyard
is free from coffin planks and plates, bones, and fragmentary
or whole skulls.[20] Those who saw Quin "Abbey" before 1879
will remember the enormous heap of skulls, (even then, however,
much diminished), heaped round a tree near the graveyard gate.
At Tomfinlough the bones and skulls were neatly stacked in a
recess, at Kilmacreehy they were heaped on a sort of side altar
in the chancel, and in other churches (Coad etc.) I have seen
single skulls staring out of holes in the wall.

Places for the burial of strangers and unbaptized children are
766 common, and are usually *killeens*, old forgotten church sites, sometimes
in a fort, sometimes at a well, or unenclosed in a field.[21]
Those at Kilquane, near Ennis; Fomerla, near Tulla; Kyleeáne,
near Barefield (with Doughnambraher stone); and Kilvoydane,
near Spansil Hill, have basin stones. Some *killeens*, such as that
between the forts of Mortyclogh, near Corcomroe Abbey, and
that at Fortanne, have crept back into favour for adult burial, but
several ancient churches at which bones are found have not been
so used in traditional memory (*e.g.* Toomullin, Crumlin, Killonaghan,
and Kilbract, round Lisdoonvarna; Templeline, in Carran;
Temple-an-aird, near Carrigaholt; St. Senan's, on Mutton Island;
Temple aed O'Connell, near Ruan; and several churches on
Scattery and Iniscaltra). The church of Kilcashen was not remembered
to have been a burial place before Eugene O'Curry's grand-
[731] father, Melachein O'Curry, in a pestilence about 1760, charitably
collected the deserted unburied corpses "on carts and sledges,"
and buried them at the ruin on his farm.[22] Bodies were similarly
buried during the Great Famine at the Lisheen, near Lough
Fergus. Oughtdarra, near Lisdoonvarna, has the remains of a
[776] church of St. Sinnach MacDara,[23] where children under seven

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[20] See also vol. xxii., p. 56.

[21] For a list, with notes, see *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. vi., ser. iii., p. 129.

[22] Kilcashen, *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 369.

[23] A saint famous all round Galway Bay, but not found in the ancient Calendars. Some suppose him to be a Fox Hero, *i.e.* Sinnach mac Dara, Fox

[P. 266

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

years of age are buried; after that age bodies are taken to the parish graveyard at Killilagh. In Shanakill, on the Shannon bank opposite Scattery, it was believed that the dead were moved supernaturally under the river into the Sacred Isle.[24] 766 [775]

I know of a case in eastern Clare where parents, having lost several of their children, tried to break the deadly record by changing their burial place, but, alas! without success.

I am not aware of any belief in Clare that the spirit of the last-comer in a graveyard has to watch the place or to bring water to the souls in Purgatory. There was, however, recently a race between two funerals to Rathblamac graveyard, which may imply some such belief. 764 [775] The custom of burying a stone from a church or an ancient tombstone in a new grave, (which has led to the disappearance of several early monuments at Clonmacnoise), prevails at Tomgraney, two ancient tombstones having recently been recovered on digging new graves. As we have already seen,[25] St. Mochulla's well avenged the encroachment of its landlord on the *killeen* beside it, but the graveyards of Kildimo, near Kilkee, and St. Catherine's at Kells, near Corofin, are under cultivation. Dr. MacNamara noted a curious allusion to the last-named in O'Daly's fierce satire on "The Tribes of Ireland" in 1610. The people of Kells are there reproached for "digging the churchyard in the snow." The oldest Irish Law Code, the *Seanchus Mór*, has a clause against digging in a churchyard or breaking bones there. Kildimo was levelled, and its site included in an orchard by 1816.[26] [765] Interference with human remains is deeply and dangerously resented, yet spells are sometimes worked with them.[27] 789 The stealing of a dead man's hand for a butter charm is said to have taken place near Kilkee,[28] and the bones of a Franciscan with the brown cloth of his gown still adhering, found during the repairs at Ennis Abbey, were nearly all taken, but probably from most reverential motives.

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son of oak tree. There is a Knockaunatinnagh (little hill of the foxes) beside his church. [776]

[24] *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. xviii. (1841), p. 545.

[25] Vol. xxii., p. 211.

[26] W. G. Mason, *A Statistical Account etc.*, vol. ii., p. 434.

[27] See *Burial and Skull Beliefs*, vol. xxii., pp. 55-6, 456.

[28] Vol. xxii., p. 340.

[P. 267]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

wrote a satire against the rats, and tried it on an infested house at 789
Kilkee, in the same year, but without success. 825

About the same time certain men in Limerick City were famous for being able to free ships in that port from rats. Their method was to fix a razor, edge upwards, on the ship, and by their charms to force the rats to cut their throats on it.[30]

Dr. G. U. MacNamara tells me that Denis Curtis near Corofin 757
cures liver complaints, bleeding, and cows that have swallowed raw potatoes. He puts his human patients on their backs on his anvil, and pretends to strike them with a sledge hammer. This is done on three occasions, on two Mondays and a Thursday. The patients then drink forge water. All the family have the gift of healing, but only one exercises it. The family legend says that St. Patrick's horse lost a shoe near Kilnaboy, and their ancestor shod it gratuitously. The saint therefore endowed the family with the power, and people even return from America to be cured by the smith.

Marriage tabu.—In eastern Clare, a newly-married woman 585
attended Mass on the Sunday next after her marriage, and was 796
severely criticised for doing so. Local opinion held that she and 626
her husband ought not to attend public worship until the second
Sunday after the marriage.[31]

Púcas.[32]—A recent apparition of the *púca* of Clonlara was 776
described to me in 1911 as a dark, shadowy horse near the bridge over the Blackwater, about two miles to the south-west of the village. My nephew, Dr. Hugh Gerald Westropp, heard of similar appearances about 1888.

Lucky and unlucky deeds.[33]—The *geasa* and *buadha*, or tabus and 777
lucky acts, relating to the present County Clare are described in the *Leabhar na g Ceart* (Book of Rights),[34] in a poem by Cuan na

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[30] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. v., ser. iii., p. 362.

[31] I learn from a Petty Sessions case, March, 1911, at Derrygonnelly, that [574]
this custom prevails also in Fermanagh, and that friends and relatives do not visit the young couple in the interim, but entertain them on the second Sunday.

[32] Addendum to vol. xxi., p. 481.

[33] Addendum to section xii., *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds*, vol. xxii., pp. 203-4.

[34] Edited by John O'Donovan, 1847, pp. 16-21. [P. 269]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

777 Leochain, who was slain in 1024. The King of Cashel (over-king, therefore, of North Munster) was forbidden to pass a night at Latteragh in northern Tipperary at the beginning of harvest; to encamp for nine consecutive nights at the river Suir; to hold a border meeting at Gowran; and to listen to the groans of women (in a raid) in southern Tipperary. The King of Connacht was not to go in a speckled cloak,—the prose adds "on a piebald horse,"—to the heath of Luchaid in Clare. On the other hand, the ruler of Cashel brought good luck by plundering cattle in Connacht while the cuckoo sings; burning north Leinster; passing over Sliabh Cua,—"on a Tuesday," says the prose,—to pacify south Munster; crossing Magh Ailbhe with a light grey host; and resting six weeks (of Lent) every year at Cashel. It was most unlucky for him to wait for a feast at Killarney Lake for a full week from a Monday. At the present day some families still have their own tabus, lucky and lucky deeds and days, dreams, and omens, which sometimes even run counter to beliefs generally received,—*e.g.* that [787] the Friday falling on the thirteenth of any month, or to dream of a wild cat or other wild animal, is lucky.

791 825 *Witch hare.*[35]—Anthony Bruodin (*Bruodinus* or *Prodinus*), a Franciscan of Quin Abbey, tells in *Corolla Oecodemicæ Minoriticæ* (Prague, 1664, p. 73) how his uncle (*patruus*), Florence of Moynaeo (Moynoe on Lough Derg) went out at the dawn of the first of May with his eldest son Bonaventura, (who died in Spain in 1643), and with their hounds to hunt hares. At last the servants saw one sucking a cow. The hounds chased it, biting it as it escaped, into a cottage, where an old woman was found torn behind.

● 776 *Glasgeivnagh cow.*[36]—Vague legends are told of her living at Treanahow, Shallee, and Ballygannon.

Ghosts or fairy men.—Mary (Mescal) Doyle, of Newmarket-on-Fergus, tells how she saw two ghostly men in black walking on a road near that village.

173 *Stolen bride.*—A legend of a stolen bride at Querin on the Shannon is told in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends etc. of Ireland* (1887), vol. i., p. 49.

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[35] Addendum to vol. xxii. p. 449.

[36] Addendum to p. 89 *supra.*

[P.270]

turies afterward, and still do in modified form, and became embodied in the 17
medieval culture which was shaped by internal innovation and borrowing from
other European traditions. Christianity came to Inis Beag in the early decades of 17
the sixth century. Inis Beag and the other islands in the vicinity became one of 779
the famous monastic centers of Ireland, where over a hundred saints lived or paid
extended visits. Among them were St. Enda of the Aran Islands, St. Columbkille
who was to Christianize Scotland and much of England, St. Kieran the founder of
Clonmacnoise, St. Brendan the Navigator who according to Irish legend reached
the coast of Florida in 551, and St. Kevin the founder of Glendalough. Among the
principal medieval Christian monuments in Inis Beag are three churches, one and
possibly two monasteries, several tombs, and a sacred well.

Only a single female saint is associated with Inis Beag, and a church in her 172
honor stands on the northwest side of the island. Although not the first church on [776]
the site, the present building was erected not later than the ninth century, and
west of its doorway under a cliff is the foundation of a *clochán* in which the officiating
clergyman may have resided. South of the church are a number of ancient
tombs, and in a small valley east of it a layer of midden lies beneath manufactured
soil. The axe heads were unearthed in the valley only a stone's throw from the
church.

Built in the tenth century to honor the patron saint of the island, a second 175
church is located atop a terrace overlooking the beach on the northeast side of 346
Inis Beag. It was used as the regular place of worship until about 1840, when sand 764
began to accumulate about it; at that time, the island cemetery was on a slight hill
west of the church, but as the sand grew deeper burials were made next to the
church, eventually to form the present cemetery which rings the building almost
completely. The tomb of the patron saint stands on the surface of the terrace a
short distance from the church, but it and the building nearly to the top of its
gables are buried in the sand (see Fig. 3). Each year on June 14th island men dig [796]
out the interior of the church and bare the tomb to commemorate the saint. A huge 172
midden, partially covered with sand and solidified to a conglomerate below its
surface, is banked against the terrace on the north and measures 20 feet in depth,
150 feet in width, and 450 feet in length. It represents the accumulation of hundreds
of years, and possibly thousands if pagan structures antedated Christian ones.

A third church lies buried beneath the sand close to the east end of the 346
beach, and is named after another saint who is believed to be interred near it. Only 173
legend supports its existence, for there is no reference to its unencumbered appearance
in the writings of the earliest visitors in the mid-seventeenth century. However, [764]
funeral processions bound from the present church to the cemetery leave the
main trail to follow what is apparently an archaic predecessor deep in the sand,
and at one point the coffin is lowered and the mourners kneel and pray for the
soul of the deceased at the place where tradition asserts that the ancient church
lies. This custom is disconcerting to the newly appointed or visiting priest, who
sometimes when leading a funeral procession will continue on the modern path
while the islanders desert him to obey a centuries old prescription.

On the west side of Inis Beag, near the shore, are located a holy well named 174
after a saint and the *clochán* in which he supposedly dwelled during a lengthy stay 778

582
621 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual
593 economic and emotional support.

591 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction
428 passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west
342 room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in
822 Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are
776 aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the
westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic
supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of
many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land
mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis
Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned
north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a
retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to
move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs
[178] (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been renovated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the
[177] traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of
[657] the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and
subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and
have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and
back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in
the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder
[372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between
the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the
kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings
[343] surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and
various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter
[244] often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or
a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.
342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or
back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening
[262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the
[264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking
[415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around
[778] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser,"
filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with
[352] "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs,
[352] or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and
[616] sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This
[595]
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The Supernatural and the Esthetic

Catholicism

Because of the writings of nativists, most visitors to Inis Beag believe 771
that the Catholicism of the folk embodies an ideal unattained even on the mainland, where the faith is thought to set an example for all of Christendom. In fact, however, the worship of the islanders is obsessively oriented [776] •
toward salvation in the next world with a corresponding preoccupation with sin in this world; there is a marked tendency toward polytheism in the manner in which they relate to the Blessed Virgin and certain Irish saints; rituals and sacred artifacts, Christian as well as pagan, often are employed by them to serve magical ends; and, finally, many observances that they hold to be orthodox Catholic are in reality idiosyncratic to Inis Beag or to Ireland. Christian morality in its outward [626]
manifestations, as we have seen, is realized to a remarkable degree, but it is less a product of the emphasis placed on good works as a means of gaining salvation than of the techniques of social control exercised by the priests and an overwhelming fear of damnation.

Coexisting with Catholicism in Inis Beag are pre-Celtic, Celtic, and early 771
medieval Christian retentions of religious beliefs and behavior. It is these which 178
are accentuated in the writings of primitivists, some of whom have ignored altogether Catholicism in the lives of the folk. Nativists and primitivists part company in the matter of religion in peasant Ireland, and writers of nativistic persuasion have exerted the most influence on visitors to Inis Beag, who are preponderantly Irish Catholic. Theologians and scholars in Ireland label as pagan unorthodox religious forms from any historical period, and many of these have become reinterpreted with similar Catholic elements. The pagan array of supernatural beings [776]
includes a variety of spirits and demons, witches, ghosts, and phantom ships; among other retentions are taboos, signs which foretell the future, charms and incantations of a protective nature, folk medicines, and the aforementioned emphasis on natural foods and other products impinging on the human body.

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and other Christian vices are detested and are likely to become the butt of satirical 828
anecdotes and ballads.

In many primitive and peasant societies, in which Christianity has dis- 000
possessed polytheistic religions, it has been observed that polytheism has left a
legacy whereby the Virgin Mary and various angels and saints are worshipped as
dispensers of personal power in their own right. This has been extended to the
Trinity among the Anang of Nigeria, who believe that God provided independent
power for his human son, Jesus, with which to convert the world to Christianity,
and for the Holy Spirit (who has joined the indigenous pantheon of spirits) to act
for mankind as healer, prognosticator, forgiver of sins, and protector against
ghosts, witches, and sorcerers (Messenger 1959:291). Most Inis Beag folk regard 771
God and the Devil, among Christian supernatural beings, as the only possessors of 776 •
personal power. But some think that power emanating from the deity is manipu-
lated by the Blessed Virgin and particular saints, and they as well as he must be
propitiated for best results. When asked why she prayed to St. Enda rather than
to other saints, an old woman said that this saint is "nearer to God" and therefore
able to capture more of his power than others. A few islanders hold that these
intermediary entities possess power not emanating from the deity, and thus may
be approached individually through prayer and sacrifice for their favor. The saints
most often appeased are St. Patrick, St. Brigid, St. Enda, and the patron saint of
the island.

The Devil is thought to command power for evil as great as or greater than
that of the Virgin Mary and the saints for good. Some believe that he controls [753]
malevolent pagan beings as well as his own minions from Hell, and he both tempts [752]
Christians to sin and attacks them bodily causing sickness, injury, and other mis-
fortunes. He is abroad at all times, although his power is amplified on such [796]
occasions as Allhallows' Eve, and sometimes he can be seen by human eyes—as a
huge, dark, indistinct figure standing at a distance, usually after nightfall or when
it is raining heavily. One evening during a severe storm, I visited without advance
notice a man milking his cow at the back of the island, and he would not approach
me as I stood atop a fence wearing oilskin and sou'wester until I called out to
him and established the fact that I was not the "big fellow" come to do him
harm. Animals are especially sensitive to the presence of Satan, and asses which [825]
run about braying loudly are believed to have seen him.

The folk do not admit to dissent or skepticism as regards their Catholic 771
faith, despite their anti-clerical attitudes, but skepticism can be inferred from many 775
of their utterances. Most doubt centers around the reality of the hereafter and its
nature, if it exists. Invariably when I talked of religion with them, whether singly [123]
or in groups, my own views of the afterworld were solicited eagerly, and such
remarks as the following, pronounced with anxiety, were forthcoming from them:
"Is there really a life after death?", "Will we meet relatives there?", "Is it bodies or
souls that live in Heaven?", "If we all meet in Heaven, won't it be too crowded?",
"How could God be so cruel as to put people in a big fire?", and "Sure, no one has
ever returned to tell of the afterlife." The most public expression of skepticism
that my wife and I encountered was in a pub when she was requested to sing
"Galway Bay" before a crowd of boisterous men; after she sang the line, "And if

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has
thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the
diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the
priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when
entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked follow- [211]
ing the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of
local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones
purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a
century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand
accumulated.

796
Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate,
who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the [793]
confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such
a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home
in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the [356]
stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their
houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the
event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water [783]
is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as
a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes
are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and
the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the [674]
priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes,
after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families in- [777]
volved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring [776]
them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them

796 to put their property in a state of good repair, which, in retrospect, is regarded as
a benefit, however much they might have complained of the labor involved during
the previous weeks.

778 The sacred well, probably appropriated from the Druids 13 centuries ago,
[174] still attracts the folk and occasionally pilgrims from Inis Thiar and other islands.
[184] On the mainland, patterns often were associated with holy wells named after
[178] saints, but this does not seem to have been the case in Inis Beag. It was customary
until about ten years ago for those who came to pray here to attach bits of cloth,
[798] rosaries, or sacred objects obtained from holy places of pilgrimage on the
mainland and abroad, but this practice was halted by the clergy as smacking of paganism.
[788] Now it is visited for religious purposes mostly by small groups on Sunday
afternoon, and by persons about to emigrate and their families who come to pray
[789] for the good fortune of the soon departed. The water in the spring is not considered
holy, but capable of "bringing the grace of God and the saint," and if it is drunk
[755] during prayer, it is believed to be especially efficacious for curing sterility, among
other afflictions. In this century, a partially blind islander is believed to have
regained his sight after paying nine visits to the well on successive Sundays, and
[789] other miraculous cures from earlier times are reported. Those who come to the
spring always seek a tiny fish or eel in the water, which, if observed, is merely a
good omen to some but an assurance of reaching Heaven to others. Attaching rags
to the well and seeking cures and omens there are all examples of reinterpretation.
[312] The spring also is used as a source of water by farmers who pasture stock in nearby
fields and by thirsting passersby.

Pagan Supernaturalism

771 Pagan supernaturalism is disavowed by the folk, and it is difficult to know
798 how widely held are beliefs in this sphere. That they are held is indisputable, as
178 attested by the active efforts of curates up to this day to eradicate them. Youth of
[793] the island overtly deny the existence of other than church approved spiritual
[787] entities, although the most outspoken disclaimer of paganism among them is visited
occasionally by the ghost of his father, who urges the continuation of a family
feud. But elders cling tenaciously to indigenous beliefs and practices, about which
they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more
skeptical fellows. Defensive about being labeled backward, the islanders feel that
[829] the "superstitions" they are said to hold most contribute to this impression. When
the folk talk of pagan retentions and reinterpretations, they ascribe them to those
who lived at the time that their parents or grandparents did, or to certain of their
[776] superstitious contemporaries. A notorious dissenter, who sometimes has occasion
to patrol the shores of Inis Beag before dawn, antagonizes his neighbors by
deriding them for their fear of venturing after dark to the back of the island, where
[115] fairies and ghosts hold sway. On telling him of my intention to spend a night
resting atop a *clochán* near the Atlantic coast, he said, "The only thing that will
[776] happen is you'll hear the cocks crow in the morning." He is the only person who
admitted to me that he disbelieves the teachings of the church concerning the soul

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and its fate. In further mocking his fellows for their apprehensions about death 798
and its aftermath, he proclaimed that the soul, "if there is such a thing, goes 178
nowhere after the heart stops beating." [115]

Celtic deities no longer are a part of the belief system of the islanders, but [775]
the culture heroes of the Iron Age—such as Cuchulainn, Finn, and Oisin—still are 771
extolled in legends, and the promontory fort and other ancient monuments and 178
some of the geographical features (for instance, glacial boulders) in Inis Beag and 776
nearby islands are explained by the actions of Celtic heroes. Spirits, demons, and [538]
witches of many sorts are the supernatural beings from the Celtic, and possibly [823]
pre-Celtic, era which figure most importantly in the pagan segment of the folk
religion. They have become incorporated into orthodox Catholicism by being
declared "works of the Devil" by those who admit to their existence (It is said
that two priests of peasant background have admitted to this belief publicly in
Inis Beag.)—a reinterpretation resorted to by many primitive and folk peoples
under the duress of acculturation with dominance. The spiritual entities most
linked with the Irish, both in writings and in popular imagination, are the troop-
ing and solitary fairies, known to the islanders as the "little people," "good people,"
or "gentry." In Inis Beag, only the leprechaun and "red man" among the numerous
solitary fairies are known. William Butler Yeats numbers the banshee, mermaid,
pookah, and water horse among the solitary fairies (Yeats ND :76-77), but these
are not regarded as such by the folk (The latter two are animal spirits, or demons,
rather than human spirits.); also found in Inis Beag are the sea spirit, or "headless
body," and other minor spirits and demons.

Fairies seldom permit themselves to be seen, but most of the islanders 776
have experienced their presence, if only through having objects mysteriously mis- 787
placed by them or hearing them sing and cobble. These beings differ considerably
in appearance—according to type, sex, and age—but most of them are knee-high
and wear green jackets, flat red caps, and buckled shoes. The trooping fairies live
in *clochán* and thorn bushes and spend most of their time feasting, singing, danc-
ing, fighting, playing games, and making love. A spirited hurling match played by
fairies on the strand was described to me by an observer who had witnessed it
from a canoe approaching the island; he and his mates rowed close enough to
overhear the creatures call out to each other by name. Small whirlwinds are a [821]
sign of their passing, and a farmer who was haying and failed to say the proper
"God bless them.", as such a wind stirred his field, was punished by having all of
the cocks that he had accumulated blown away. One verse of my ballad, poorly [123]
received by most islanders, tells of men who were afraid to board the freighter for
several nights after trooping fairies had been seen dining in the mess and a ghost
pacing the deck. Fairies disregard human beings most of the time, but they can
harm those who disregard or speak ill of them, as well as play "fairy pranks" out
of sheer capriciousness. One of their favorite modes of attack is to cast "fairy [172]
darts" at their victims; on the mainland, these are prehistoric flint artifacts, but in
Inis Beag they are any small pebbles supposedly thrown from the sky to cause
bodily harm. An Inis Thiar man collected a number of darts allegedly cast at him [798]
by irate gentry, only to have the collection confiscated by the curate in whom he [793]
indiscreetly confided. The most feared practice of trooping fairies is that of steal- [763]

• 776

787 ing souls of children and leaving in their place changelings, who gradually sicken
[753] and die. Since boys are favored over girls, Irish peasants of the region until
recently dressed their male offspring in petticoats, sometimes up to the age of 18
[562] years, to deceive the little people. Even now parents are loath to praise the health
[789] or beauty of their children for fear that the gentry will overhear and be prompted
to victimize their souls.

[114] Solitary fairies are described by Yeats as "withered, old, and solitary, in
every way unlike the sociable [trooping fairies]. . . . They dress with all unfairy
homeliness, and are, indeed, most sluttish, slouching, peering, mischievous phan-
776 toms" (Yeats ND :76). The long occupation of Inis Beag by leprechauns is
778 evidenced by the Garden of the Cobbler and a spring at the back of the island,
shaped like the sole of a shoe, which is known as Well of the Boot. Occasionally a
leprechaun has been seen in the former location, but only the sound of a tapping
hammer has been heard in the latter. Instead of guarding a buried pot of gold at
the foot of a rainbow, as popularly conceived, the leprechaun of Inis Beag possesses
a small purse in which he keeps but a single coin. Children sometimes are urged
[823] to hunt for the hidden purse, as a distraction by harassed parents. The rift valley
between Castle and High Villages is thought to be the home of at least one "red
man." He wears a pointed cap to denote cleverness and has a laugh, as distinctive
as the hammering of the leprechaun, by which his presence is known. A practical
joker with poltergeist qualities, the red man prefers to frequent houses, where
[123] his mischief is countered with bottles of holy water. From November of 1959
until June of 1963, my wife and I experienced, first in Inis Beag and then in our
home in the United States, the antics of an unseen being who opened doors and
windows, turned on lights and water faucets, and imbibed our Irish whiskey.
Tongue-in-cheek, we placed the blame for these uncanny occurrences on an
amiable solitary fairy who had attached himself to us, but eventually I felt com-
pelled to report our unique contact with the Celtic supernatural to the anthro-
pological community—a gesture regarded as "poison oak in the scientific groves of
academe" (Messenger 1962:367–373).

763
776 The spiritual omens of death are three in Inis Beag: the sound of trooping
fairies building a coffin for the victim, soft tapping on the window pane of his
bedroom, and the wailing of the banshee during the night before his demise. No
one has ever viewed the banshee, but many have heard her cry out in the night,
and the keen of Celtic derivation is said to be an imitation of her funeral call.
[428] She attaches herself only to certain families which inherit her patrilineally. An
[123] aged Inis Beag man was seriously ill with influenza on the night that my wife and
I sponsored a dancing party, and a young man departing from it three hours after
midnight played his accordion as he walked to his home located near that of the
sick person. On learning of this event, the nurse shortly after dawn hurried to her
patient to assure him that the wails he might have heard came from the instrument
of the inexpert youth and not from the family banshee; at this news, thanatomania
was prevented and the man lived another three weeks, when the banshee at last
184 cried and was heard by those at his deathbed. Opinion is divided as to whether it
763 is the fairies or the banshee who announce death by window tapping, but as a
776 practical joke islanders long ago used to tap on the bedroom windows of those
[522] persons considered overly superstitious.

persons considered overly superstitious. Interesting to note here is the fact that 184
even before the beginning of this century, strength of belief in the pagan super- 178
natural varied among the folk. 771

Three water dwellers found in the ocean surrounding Inis Beag are the 776 •
mermaid, sea spirit, and water horse. At least one and maybe three mermaids are 778
associated with particular locations along the coastline of the island. This spirit
usually is found sitting on a rock with her fish tail in the water and combing her
long hair, although she has been seen hovering over the surface of the sea in a
"robe of mist." Discussion of her in the pubs always induces embarrassment among
the men, because her perfectly formed female upper body is nude and not always
hidden by her tresses; she appears to delight in exposing herself to the puri-
tanical folk. The sea spirit is called the "headless body" for the reason that his
seaweed covered hulk lacks any appendages. Like the seal who bears a human
soul, he favors following in the wake of *curach*—bobbing up and down in the
water and staring balefully at the seamen with huge eyes. Only by dropping an
object containing gold into the ocean deeps, which the spirit finds irresistible, can
his pursuit be impeded short of rowing back to the island. My wife and I brought [123]
to Inis Beag a foot-high statue of a troll, purchased two years before in Norway,
made of moss with large glass eyes, which we hung from the wall of our kitchen
(as we had from the dashboard of our car) as a good luck charm. It aroused
excitement among fishermen who visited us because of its resemblance to the
headless body; one man reasoned that this being must inhabit all of the northern
seas, and probably arouses equal consternation among Scottish and Scandinavian
seafarers. The water horse is a demon counterpart of the mermaid, with black body
of a steed and tail of a giant fish. Until 40 years ago, it lived in the fresh water [178]
lake of Inis Beag, where it was seen on certain nights traveling abreast the surface
with its head held high and mane waving in the wind. Now it is seen only at
sea and infrequently at great distance.

The single pookah of Inis Beag resides in a Copper-Bronze Age tumulus [764]
(see Fig. 12), which became a medieval cemetery with rough headstones still in [823]
place; located on the western margin of the common land, it is known as the
Hill of Ferns. In the Middle Ages, the church urged systematic reinterpretation of 175
Christian and pagan elements (It was advocated as early as 601 by Pope Gregory 779
VII in a letter to priests who were proselytizing the primitive Britons.). This policy 778
is attested in Inis Beag and neighboring islands not only by Christian graveyards 177
being located contiguous to pagan ones, but by Christian church buildings incor-
porating Druidic temples and Celtic holy wells being appropriated by Christian [346]
worshippers. During the day, the "dog of the tumulus," as this demon is called, [778]
will twist the limbs of unwary individuals who chance to fall asleep on the mound, 776
and at night it is known to race across the sands of strand and common land,
altering its size at will from that of a small dog to that of a bull, to frighten those
who might be passing. It appears that Irish emigrants carried both the mermaid [771]
and pookah abroad with them as early as the seventeenth century, at least to the
West Indies. In doing research among the "Black Irish" of Montserrat during
1965, 1966, and last year, I discovered a mermaid with white skin who guards a
pot of gold buried on top of Chance's Mountain, and a pookah in the form of a

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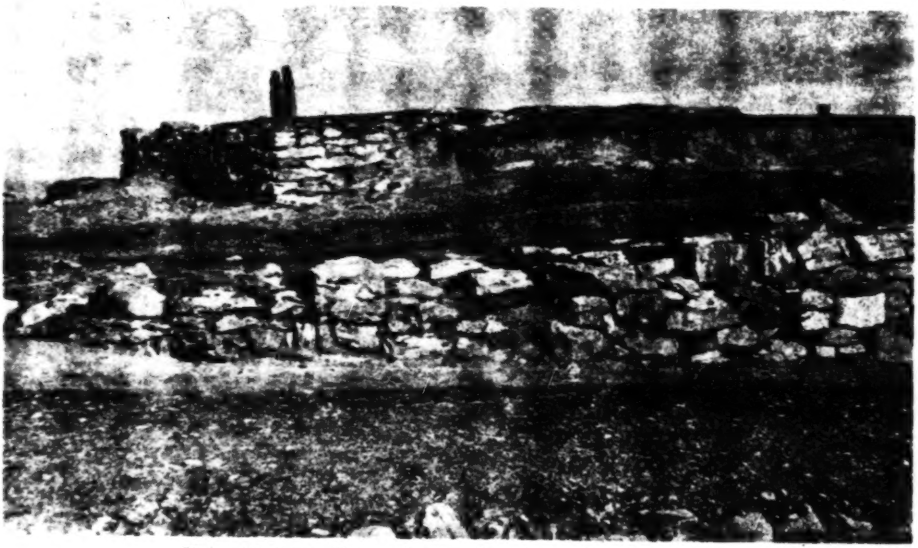

Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [171] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

754 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after
754 midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies,
753 she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When
755 it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human
855 offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

754 [624] [576] Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

175 November 1st. Imbolc heralded the coming of spring with the lactation of ewes,
796 while at Beltaine cattle were driven to open grazing after passing between bon-
221 fires which magically protected them against disease and ensured their fertility.
The harvest commenced with Lughnasa, and the grazing season ended with
796 Samhain. Of these festivals, Imbolc has become reinterpreted with the feast of St.
178 Brigid; Beltaine and Samhain, known today as May Day and Allhallows respec-
[771] tively, have remained almost untouched by Christianity and are observed in
[114] Inis Beag; but Lughnasa has disappeared from island tradition. Lughnasa still is
celebrated in many parts of Ireland and is the subject of a monumental folklore
study—Maire MacNeill's *The Festival of Lughnasa*; until the introduction of
early potatoes into Inis Beag, harvesting commenced on this day, but any other
practices associated with Lughnasa were abandoned long ago. Minor pagan festi-
vals have become reinterpreted with Whitsuntide and the feasts of St. John, St.
Martin, and St. Stephen, all of which are observed in Inis Beag.

776 Brigid, the most renowned of Irish female saints, was a cowherd and
[824] therefore is associated with cattle and with flowers, such as the dandelion, which
nourish young lambs in the spring. On the last day of January, a small "Brigid's
776 Cross" is fashioned from straw in each household of Inis Beag, and is thrust into
778 the thatching at the end of the feast day. Crosses once were made from rushes,
[824] wood, metal, and even paper, and it is possible to determine the age of a thatched
[174] cottage being dismantled or renovated by counting the number of crosses salvaged
from the straw debris. The Celts worshipped the sun whose symbol was the
[175] swastika, and the Brigid's Cross takes this form. It is a charm which protects the
house (and the byre on the mainland) and those within it from harm, especially
735 by fire, during the year. At the beginning of this century, a destitute woman who
776 lived alone used to go from door to door begging for food and carrying a large
778 "Brigid's Doll" made of straw and dressed immaculately in white with a picture
of the saint on its breast. Some of the folk pulled straw from the doll to manu-
[538] facture their crosses. After the woman recited the following poem, she was pre-
[782] sented with food in honor of the saint, for which she blessed each person in the
household with the doll:

[539]

Here comes Brigid
Dressed in white.
Give her something
For the night.

She is deaf and
She is dumb.
For God's sake,
Give her some.

536 735 Today, small groups of girls travel about the island emulating their predecessor
431 by begging for coins to buy candy and donate to the church. A Brigid's Doll dressed
776 in confirmation garb is carried by the leader of each group, and is used to confer
778 blessings after the girls have recited in unison the two verses.

796 May Eve and Allhallows' Eve are both times when it is dangerous to go
776 out of doors alone at night or be abroad after midnight, for the "big fellow"
roams the back of the island, and everywhere pagan fairies, witches, vindictive
[822] ghosts, and the dog of the tumulus search for human victims. The safety of cattle
[778] is of particular concern to the folk on May Eve, and a common practice is to
[233] attach to the horn or tail of a cow a cloth containing a piece of iron which has

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. 776
Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of [778]
wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to [233]
"give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of
the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time 796
garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. [784]
Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the [782]
Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is [777]
tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for [769]
future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a [784]
small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of [538]
the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night
when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of 123
cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed 796
by the quick hardening metal. 787

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, 796
but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as 776
the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually [821]
the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend
to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does
anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a [513]
danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children
and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground
unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the
demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or [461]
decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter [777]
are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then
may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern
day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer [867]
celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather [313]
wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of
Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for [372]
protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A [789]
man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the [842]
failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the
folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the
hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven
between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry
leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish [114]
life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*, the
plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British
anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns
jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin 539
(O Suilleabhain 1957:252–261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish 796

539
796 origin, and the church honors St. Martin of Tours in the liturgy of November
11th. O Suilleabhain suggests that the Catholic feast has been reinterpreted with
[178] a pagan festival, which had the sacrificial shedding of blood as one of its main
[782] facets. St. Martin also is associated with the grinding of corn and with miraculous
[252] powers for causing growth in plants and creating animals from inanimate matter.
796 In Inis Beag, the saint is regarded as a miller who was martyred in Ireland during
776 the Middle Ages by being cast under a mill wheel and ground to death. A few
798 islanders still observe the taboos of not turning wheels or spinning on the vigil
and feast day to honor his martyrdom. The Sunday before St. Martin's Day is
796 called "bloody Sunday," when those who can afford to do so butcher a sheep to be
776 consumed by the family on the feast day; others less fortunate kill a fowl or duck
782 during the vigil. Using the sacrificed animal's blood, the father or mother makes
[231] the sign of the cross on the forehead of each member of the family, while praying
[828] that the saint guard the safety of all in the year to follow. Some folk use the blood
[237] to bless in a like manner the fireplace, bedposts, front door, and outbuildings; all
crosses, including those on the forehead, are allowed to remain until obliterated
by natural causes.

796 Just as the girls of Inis Beag carry the Brigid's Doll and beg from door to
825 door on the feast day of the saint, the boys do the same with a wren attached to
417 a long wooden pole on the morning of St. Stephen's Day, the feast day following
53 Christmas. The "wrenboys" travel in pairs and are invited into each home, where
they are awarded coins for dancing and singing this song:

> Wren, wren, the king of the birds,
> St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze.
> So little I am, my family is great.
> Get up landlady and give us a break.
>
> Up with the kettle and down with the pan,
> And give us a shilling to carry the wren.
> If you haven't a shilling a ha'penny will do.
> If you haven't a ha'penny—God bless you.

Handkerchiefs, ribbons, and a sprig of holly also are attached to the pole, and in
1959 only one pair of youths managed to "hunt the wren" successfully and thus
maintain the tradition. A home is not blessed by these visitations, as in the case
of the groups of girls on St. Brigid's Day, but the act of giving money is believed
[184] to bring luck to the household. In some regions of the mainland, wrenboys wear
straw masks, animal skins, or horns, and carry the wren on a holly bush or decorated
wooden tray as they march in procession shouting and singing songs to the
accompaniment of homemade skin tambourines (Evans 1957:279). Little is known
of the pagan roots of the ceremony.

771 In addition to the reinterpretations associated with the holy well and with
776 Celtic festivals, there are many others of lesser significance of which only three
will be considered here: beliefs concerning ghosts, the evil eye, and the afterworld.
771 We have seen that most of the folk have had contact of some sort with the fairies;
775 they also have witnessed ghosts—called "shades"—in corporeal form in Inis Beag
or sailing the surrounding waters. These beings, who "aren't of this world," some-

times are recognized as recently deceased islanders, but more often they are 771
"strangers" from another generation or another region of Ireland. They appear 775
and disappear without warning and travel silently singly or in small groups.
Usually they pay little or no heed to the living who chance to observe them, but
they will attack those who have wronged them and occasionally others for seemingly
no reason. A man told me of being beaten severely by three unknown men,
obviously shades, early one evening at the back of the island; he might have been
killed but for the intervention of two women, also strangers to him. At one time,
persons who feared being assaulted by vengeful or capricious ghosts carried coals
to protect themselves. The folk believe that shades are souls of the dead in Purgatory,
which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus. While on earth, they do [783]
penance by laboring at economic tasks—carrying seaweed, planting gardens, and
fishing—near their former homes, and the work that they accomplish is undone
once they disappear.

Christianity touches on the evil eye in more ways than providing the 771
magical incantation, "God bless you.", which automatically opposes the power of 776 •
God to that of the witch. Many islanders explain the evil eye by positing the 754
presence of both the deity and the Devil in each human body. God rests on the 178
right side and urges a person to do good deeds, while Satan rests on the left and 826
tempts him to commit sins. In most individuals, the deity dominates the body
much of the time, but in the case of one with the evil eye, the Devil somehow
has gained perpetual ascendancy and transmits his destructive power through the
left eye of the person. It is the constant flowing of malignant power from within
which causes the disfigurement in or near the left eye of the witch. The association [822]
of evil with the left is a phenomenon widely distributed among the peoples of
the world, as is the linking of evil with black. Ghost masks are painted black to [171]
symbolize their evil nature by the Anang of Nigeria, and sacrifices to deity and
ancestors at shrines are made with the right hand, and to ghosts, witches, and the
spirit of sorcery with the left. In Inis Beag, people who have swarthy skin, black 826
hair, and brown eyes, although not considered witches, are thought to possess evil 828
power of some sort and are to be avoided. A curate possessing these physical traits 754
who served in the island recently was mistrusted and shunned whenever possible [793]
even though "a man chosen by God Almighty." An interesting conjecture is how
successful would be the research in Inis Beag of an anthropologist with dark
complexion and hair and a cast in his brown left eye.

The afterworld of the Celts, known as the Isle of the Blest or the Land of 775
Youth, lay to the west of Ireland. It has been sighted by a few fortunate Inis Beag 772
fishermen, either low-lying on the horizon with lights sparkling when it has risen
from the sea, as it does periodically, or in the ocean deeps with the spires of its
buildings and their tolling bells near the surface. This is a forested land inhabited
by souls of the dead, and by fairies who travel to and from the mainland in
"fairy ships." Few islanders now syncretize the Isle of the Blest with the Christian
Heaven, as was common a century ago, but there are those who claim to have seen
fairy ships from there skirt Inis Beag headed for the mainland. These are masted
schooners carrying lights with no signs of life on their decks, which heave into
sight and vanish instantaneously and can move far more swiftly than their counter-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

population in the presence of strangers, to conform to the nativistic and primitivistic 164 [829]
stereotype. Probably the most robust of the two dozen islanders past the
age of 70 years believes that he will live to be 100 years old, because he continues [668]
to be active physically and doesn't "worry about the health;" he accuses his fellows [753]
of "worrying themselves into the grave" over matters of body and soul.

The etiology of mental illness as conceived by the islanders is varied and 828
embraces both natural and spiritual realms. "Insanity" stigmatizes the victim and [743]
his family, often for many generations, no matter what its cause, and as many
psychotics are treated at home—hidden from the probing eyes of strangers—as are
incarcerated in the mental institution serving the region of which Inis Beag is
a part. Statistics on mental disorders are hard to come by because of the opprobrium 164
attached to insanity, but at least eight of the folk were institutionalized for 743
various periods between 1940 and 1965. Only one of these is a woman and none 753
were violent prior to admission. Inheritance, inbreeding, and the menopause are
the natural causes most widely accepted by the islanders, but some claim that heavy
blows to the head, acute alcoholism, and even prolonged emotional tension—or
"nerves"—can induce insanity. In explaining why a former Inis Beag curate was
committed to a mental institution, an old man revealed what is probably the most
significant cause of mental illness in Ireland when he said that the constant association
of the priest with a pretty housekeeper "drove him mad from frustration;"
he advocated that only elderly, plain-appearing women (who will not "gab"
everything that they know to "our man") be hired for the task.

Supernatural forces are believed capable of causing not only mental illness,
but most other maladies and injuries as well. Pagan dispensers of ill health are [776]
vengeful or capricious fairies, ghosts, and witches of the evil eye, while Catholicism [787]
provides an unpredictable Devil, a deity who punishes sinful thoughts and deeds
in this world as well as in the next, and priests who in Inis Beag often have interpreted [178]
the boundaries of sin according to Irish and personal criteria. In the case
of certain folk stricken with mental disorders, I have heard specific causes put
forth to account for their condition: parents who are second cousins, the evil eye
of a neighbor, punishment by God for a particular misdeed, and a priest's curse.
A man who mistreated his aged bachelor uncle before his recent death now is
haunted with the specter of being struck down from the grave with sickness,
injury, or madness by the shade of the uncle seeking revenge. His despair and
erratic behavior arouse little sympathy from his fellows, who await the day of
reckoning. The stigma of mental illness arises from its designation as inheritable [829]
or a sign of the deity's displeasure, both of which may doom those of generations [827]
to come. There is a strong suspicion among the folk that other maladies which are [776]
deforming or leave physical aftereffects once cured can be transmitted through
inheritance. In this category are two mongoloids, one dwarf, one epileptic, one 753
person with goiter, one with a cleft palate, and one who has recovered from 732
poliomyelitis. These disabilities also can stigmatize a family. 827

Probably the most infamous custom associated with the Irish is their excessive 293
intake of intoxicating drink, and certainly Inis Beag islanders are no exception
to the stereotype. Men drink far more than women, but even though the latter [562]
widely condemn the practice many are known to send their children to the pubs

593 later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheri-
428 tance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts
to ensure favored treatment in old age.

562 Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are
574 restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the
571 winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women
[484] leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make
infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly
women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the
[275] island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their
[524] womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs,
play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period
when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of
kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire
177 island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age
462 of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with
men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now
they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some
of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

178 The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are
771 critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis
Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved super-
771 natural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs
• 776 and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they
are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their
776 more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings in-
cludes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and
animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions.
Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping
and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most
formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial
mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape
and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons
775 who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are
frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought
to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as
a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of
754 Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of
witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three
persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil